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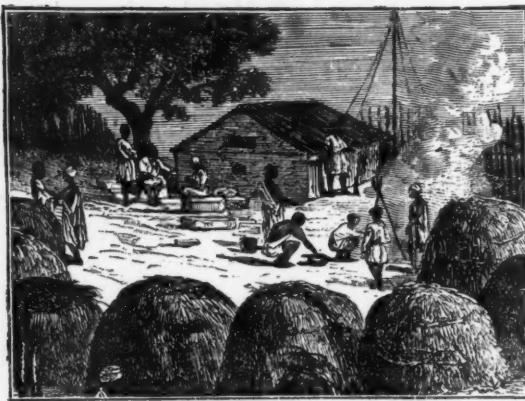
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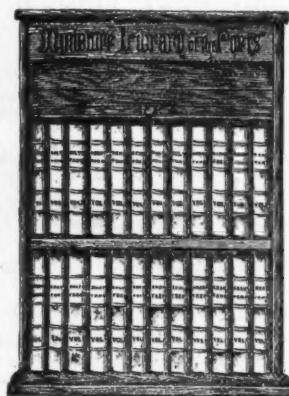
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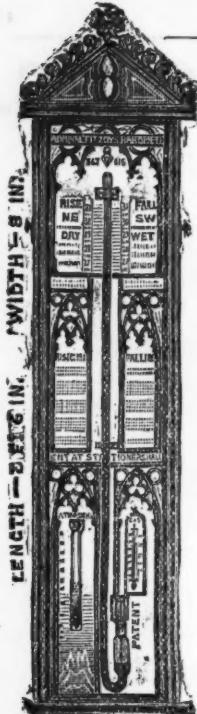
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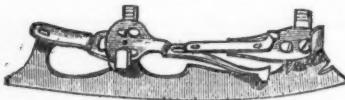
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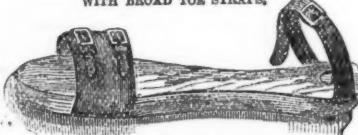
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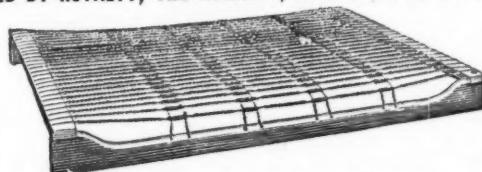
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MRS. BECKETT.

IT is two o'clock in the July afternoon, and on what the majority of Londoners, in spite of Geronimo's opinion to the contrary, consider the pleasantest day in the week, because it is a half-holiday. Geronimo's objection to Saturday was founded, the poet tells us, on the prolonged wear of his shirt; but to the city toiler that is a small objection; indeed the greatest of all Londoners, and one who worked the hardest (though not, it is true, unless he was obliged), has left it on record, through his biographer, that he did not like clean linen.

Hyde Park is crowded with pleasure-seekers, but the Row is empty. The Upper Ten Thousand have gone home to lunch, the Over Two Millions have just dined. Beside the mile-long garden that extends from the Marble Arch to Apsley House, the 'swart mechanic' lounges pipe in mouth admiringly; he gazes at the glowing parterres of wondrous shape and hue, and wonders how 'them colour beds' are made, and (especially) who pays for them. He thinks how his Missis and the kids would enjoy the spectacle, and is half-inclined to fetch them; but upon reflection, and finding his mouth a little dry, considers the morrow better adapted for their recreation, and, crossing to the other side of the road, drops into the public-house in the mews. As he does so, he

bestows, perhaps, a glance at the stately pile at its corner, and expresses an opinion, mingled with tobacco juice, that 'the cove as lives there—must have a sight of money'—in which he is quite correct.

Of all the mansions in Park Lane, albeit there are some, though not many, larger, Beckett House gives the strongest impression to the passer-by not only of wealth, but, what is a very different thing (and much better), the possession of an abundance of ready money. Just as on illumination nights we see the lines of some public edifice picked out with fire, so all the summer long the balconies of Beckett House show, tier on tier, their glowing lines of flowers. Under the large portico there is a miniature jungle of tropical foliage, and when at night the opened door gives a glimpse of the interior to the passing Peri, it seems to her an Eden indeed.

Nor even in winter does this shrine of Flora lack its gifts, for in the centre and on either wing are great conservatories, to which 'the time of roses' is but a poetic figment, and May (for once) is happy in December's arms.

Mrs. Beckett, the owner of this palace, has a passion for flowers, which her wealth enables her to indulge to the full; nor is this the only proof of her good taste. She had once a handle to her name, but laid it aside by an act of voluntary abnegation. Emperors and others have done the like before her, but a woman—never. Her first husband was Sir Robert Orr, a city knight, who left her an immense jointure and 'her ladyship.' He had never been remarkable for personal beauty, and unless in the sense of years—he was three times her age—could hardly have been called accomplished. It was a marriage of convenience; but the old man had been kind to her in life and death, and she respected his memory. When she married her second husband, John Beckett, the railway engineer, she dropped her 'ladyship'; Sir Robert had been intensely proud of the title, and she felt that it belonged to him. The law, of course, would have decided as much, but she might have retained it by courtesy. She was not a woman to parade her sentiments, and, having some sense of humour, was wont to account for this act of self-sacrifice upon moral grounds; she did not think it respectable, she said, to figure with her husband in the 'Morning Post' as Mr. Beckett and Lady Orr; she left that suspicious anomaly for the wives of bishops.

John Beckett had been a rich man, though he could not have measured purses with Sir Robert, and he had ten times his wits,

He had not wasted them much on building bridges or hollowing tunnels out of the 'too solid earth ;' he left such enduring monuments to scientific theorists, and applied the great powers of his mind—he called them without the faintest consciousness of self-satire its 'grasp'—to contracts ; mostly in connection with coal. He took the same practical view of matrimony, which poor Lady Orr had never guessed, and for her part had wedded her second husband for love. It was unintelligible to her that a man of so much wealth should pant for more ; but he did so to his last breath. If he could have carried all his money (and hers) away with him—'to melt,' or 'to begin the next world with'—he would have done it and left her penniless. As it was, he died suddenly—killed by a fall from his horse below her very windows—and intestate. Even when his scarce breathing body was lying in an upstair chamber, and she tending it with all wifely solicitude, she could not stifle a sense of coming enfranchisement after twenty-five years of slavery, or the consciousness that her Sir Robert had been the better man of the two.

A woman of experience at least, if not of wisdom, was the present mistress of Beckett House ; with strong passions, but with a not ungenerous heart ; outspoken from the knowledge of her 'great possessions,' perhaps, as much as from natural frankness ; a warm friend and not a very bitter enemy ; and at the bottom of it all with a certain simplicity of character, of which her love for flowers was an example. She had loved them as Kitty Conway, the country doctor's daughter, when violets instead of camellias had been 'her only wear,' sweet-peas and wallflowers the choicest ornaments of her little garden, and Park Lane to her unsophisticated mind like other lanes. 'Fat, fair, and forty,' she was wont to call herself at the date this story opens, and it was the truth ; but not the whole truth. Fat she was and fair she was, but she was within a few years of fifty. Of course she was admirably preserved ; as the kings of old took infinite pains that their bodies after death should not decay, so women do their best for themselves in that way while still in the flesh ; and Mrs. Beckett was as youthful as art and care could make her. In shadow and with the light behind her, persons of the other sex might have set her down as even less mature than she described herself to be. There would have been at least ten years' difference between their 'quotations'—as poor Sir Robert would have called them—and that of her tiring maid.

Five years she had had of gilded ease and freedom, since

drunken, greedy, hard John Beckett had occupied his marble hall in Kensal Green—Sir Robert had a similar edifice of his own in Highgate cemetery, for she had too much good taste to mix their dust—and on the whole she had enjoyed them. Far too well favoured by fortune, however, not to have her detractors, she was whispered by some to be by no means averse to a third experiment in matrimony. ‘There swam no goose so gray,’ they were wont to quote, and ‘There was luck in odd numbers.’ Gossips will say anything, and men delight in jokes against the fair sex. There is one about matrimony which was applied to the present case. A student of human nature once inquired of his grandmother (ætat. 80) at what age females ceased to experience the tender passion. ‘My dear boy,’ she answered, rather tartly, ‘you must ask somebody much older than I am.’ There was even a rumour, not old enough to be a legend, that Mrs. Beckett had once sounded her confidential man of business, Mr. Rennie, upon this subject. ‘As you consult me as a friend,’ he said—by which he meant gratuitously—‘my opinion, my dear madam, is not worth much; but as to the remarriage of widows—in cases where they have 30,000*l.* a year at their own disposal—I think it risky.’

Mrs. Beckett sighed, for she remembered that even when she was but twenty she had been married for her money. Still every man was not like John Beckett; and how nice Sir Robert must have been when he was young.

On the day on which our story opens, the widow was sitting in her drawing-room with a novel in her hand, on which, however, she was not bestowing that close regard, I do not say which such an agreeable description of literature has a right to expect, but even the commonest attention; her glance wandered with ill-concealed impatience over the top of her book to the gorgeous timepiece on the mantelpiece, the hands of which were travelling over gold and china towards two o’clock.

Suddenly her fair face flushed crimson; her eyes had met with another pair bound on the same identical errand; Miss Marvon, her young friend and ‘companion,’ was also watching the clock.

‘Do you want your lunch, Mary?’ inquired the lady of the house, with a very good imitation of a yawn.

‘Not at all, thank you, Mrs. Beckett,’ was the quiet reply, delivered in the gentlest and sweetest of tones. It was not her dependent position that gave honey to her speech; it was natural to Mary Marvon to be sweet and gentle to everybody, but espe-

cially to those who were kind to her; and Mrs. Beckett had been very kind. The jewels on the girl's shapely wrist, the lace about her dainty neck, the very dress which fitted her slight but graceful figure with such completeness, were all Mrs. Beckett's gifts. Nay, in her dark brown hair blushed a scarlet flower, which Mrs. Beckett in her characteristic admiration for it, had placed there with her own hands that morning as being the fittest setting for such a floral jewel. If anything were wanting to show how smooth and even was the social ground on which the two women stood, notwithstanding the conventional relation between them, it was found in the next words that Mrs. Beckett spoke. As a rule ladies do not think it worth while to excuse themselves to their hired companions for this or that, whereas our widow paid hers the compliment of telling a 'tarradiddle' or white lie, in order to explain her recent interest in the timepiece.

'I was thinking,' she said, 'what a want of originality and sense of appropriateness there must be in clockmakers, since they all represent the progress of Time by hands, as if he was an acrobat. If legs were too unpoetical or indelicate, they might at least use wings.'

'It is only with the exceptionally fortunate, however,' returned Mary, smiling, 'that Time moves on wings.'

'I doubt whether people are always the happier for that,' observed Mrs. Beckett.

'Perhaps not,' assented Mary. 'I should think those lives are the most enviable which are passed smoothly and equably, but not at eagle speed.'

'That was not quite what I had in my mind,' returned the widow, rising and looking thoughtfully through the open window. 'I was thinking that when Time seems to drag, because of our expectations, it is often better for us that it should drag on, and that they should remain without fulfilment. The secret of happiness in this world'—those three last words were mere garnish, and suited with her voice and manner no better than a flower made of a carrot or a turnip with some delicate entrée—'is not to expect, but to make the best of what we have—Was not that the front door bell?'

The last observation was by no means uttered in the same philosophic tone as the rest, and a faint red suffused the widow's cheeks. The colour too came into Mary Marvon's face, which was, however, averted from her patroness, as she answered 'I think so.'

Then they remained silent. If they were listening for a step

upon the stair they must have been very sanguine, or else in possession of the gifts of Fine Ear in the fairy tale; for three-pile carpets are not good conductors of sound. If they could have seen what was going on below stairs they would have seen *this*: a young man of four-and-twenty or so, bright-eyed and fresh-complexioned, but with that subdued air which betokens dry humour rather than that of the sparkling kind, had been admitted by the hall porter, and introduced by the good offices of two tall footmen to the butler, Harris. This personage preceded him up the staircase with much solemnity, but on the landing paused, perceiving that the visitor was not following him.

‘All right, my man,’ said a cheerful voice from below, ‘I will be with you at the finish, but I really cannot go your pace.’

Then he came up three steps at a bound, just in time to be announced at the drawing-room door as ‘Mr. Sotheran.’

‘Oh, it’s you, is it, Charley?’ observed the widow in a tone of undisguised disappointment.

‘Well, yes, in default of a better it’s poor me. Were you expecting an hereditary prince or what?’

‘Lunch!’ said Mrs. Beckett, sharply.

Whether this was a reply to his question or an order to Harris seemed doubtful; but the butler took it in the latter sense.

‘It is served,’ he said, ‘me lady.’

The title he used seemed out of place; but the fact was, though Mrs. Beckett had voluntarily descended in the social scale, her servants had objected to that arrangement. The old ones had been permitted after her second marriage to address her by the old phrase, which they pretended they could not forget, while the new ones adopted it readily enough as giving importance to their office. Mrs. Beckett had made certain efforts to put a stop to it and with this very man—‘Remember I am not “my lady,” Harris.’

‘Very good, me lady—I mean ma’am—but having always been with persons of title, if you will please to remember, it is difficult, in your ladyship’s presence too’ (Harris was astute and would have made an excellent ambassador, except perhaps to the United States), ‘not to say “me lady.”’

And I think Mrs. Beckett rather liked a practice which reminded the world how much she had given up and from the noblest motives.

CHAPTER II.

A FRIEND OF THE HOUSE.

IT was hard upon ‘Charley’ that his hostess had made it manifest she would have preferred to welcome somebody else ; but what he felt much more was, that Miss Marvon also received him with a similar lack of enthusiasm.

‘ You are early to-day,’ she said, not indeed without a pleasant smile, but that belonged to her and could no more be dispensed with than the Austrian lip or the Caucasian nose by their hereditary wearers : ‘ I am afraid you are defrauding the revenue.’

‘ And the tax-payers,’ added Mrs. Beckett, ‘ which is me.’

‘ And this it is to be in a government office ! ’ exclaimed the young fellow, clasping his hands despairingly ; ‘ to rise—but only by ten pounds a year—with the lark, to work like a horse at a mill-wheel, and if one shares a half-holiday with the poorest, and gets away from one’s house of toil upon a Saturday—’

‘ Come, take Mary’s arm, sir,’ interrupted the widow, ‘ and lead her downstairs—— No, my dear’ (for Mary had modestly drawn back)—‘ I will not inflict myself upon him, and he hasn’t the strength for it. The duties of the young gentlemen in the Probate Office are too overwhelming.’

‘ No one can say we have not the Will,’ he began imploringly.

‘ Be quiet, sir ; you learn nothing but jokes there : Mary, I insist.’

Charley drew the young lady’s arm within his own, and with a murmur, ‘ How cruel she is to me ! ’ led the way to the dining-room.

From the above it may be gathered that, though she had behaved to him so scornfully, Mr. Charles Sotheran was by no means looked on with disfavour by the lady of the house ; and indeed she treated none of his sex with such familiarity. His mother was a clergyman’s widow who had been her school friend, and to whom she was still the ‘Kitty’ of thirty years ago. She had promised her, when the boy came up to town, that Beckett House should be a home to him, and he came in and out of it, as he himself expressed it, like a cat for whom a hole has been cut in the door. It was pleasant to see the expression of the widow’s eyes as she followed the pair downstairs ; a woman would have translated it at once. ‘ I intend these two young people to be one, and a very pretty pair they’ll make.’

Flesh and blood, however, are not so easy to match as Dresden china, and though Mrs. Beckett couldn't see it, or rather would not, there was an obstacle to her good intentions. Though one of the young people was willing enough to meet her views, the other was not. A Scotch lady, whose daughter was recently married, was asked by an old friend whether she might congratulate her upon the event. 'Yes, yes,' she answered, 'upon the whole it is very satisfactory; it is true Jeannie hates her gudeman, but then there's always a something.' Mrs. Beckett took a similar view; she was aware that Mary Marvon had no love for Charley, but that circumstance did not deter her from pursuing her plan. When one has thirty thousand a-year the will is strong. There was 'always a something,' she said to herself, and though her *protégée* might feel no great affection for the young man at present, it would surely come in time. She knew from her own case that a marriage could be happy without much previous attachment on the lady's part; and, alas, could be unhappy *with* it. Mary Marvon did not hate her possible gudeman; on the contrary, she liked him very much, except when he showed symptoms of liking her too well, when she always put a stop to his advances. This state of affairs puzzled her patroness not a little. She would have suspected any other girl in Mary's position of 'looking a little higher' than at a clerk in the Probate Office, especially as she might have looked with success, for Miss Marvon's beauty and accomplishments, and perhaps the consciousness that she was the friend and *protégée* of a millionaire without a relative, had already brought more than one eligible suitor to her feet; but Mrs. Beckett knew Mary too well to impute any such motive to her. The girl was of a proud and independent spirit, very susceptible to kindness, but of a nature that would have resented patronage from an archangel.

The wealth that surrounded her, notwithstanding that until the last few months she had been altogether unaccustomed to it, affected her no more than summer sunshine. She admitted to herself that it was pleasant and enjoyable enough, but if it came on to rain or even to snow, there were ways of passing one's existence within doors; she had resources of her own and was independent of the weather.

These, however, were not material resources; she had no patrimony, indeed she had never known either father or mother. The one had died six months before she saw the light, and the other when she was but an infant. Mrs. Sotheran, who had been

her mother's friend, had put her out to nurse, educated, and in a manner adopted her. But though she had shown her every kindness, and taken the utmost care in the selection of her home as regarded her well-being and comfort, that home had been a school. Though Mrs. Sotheran had often come to see her, she had never taken the orphan to her own house. The reason she had given for this was the state of her health, which indeed was delicate enough, the number of her family, and the calls upon her time made by an invalid husband; but the circumstance, taken in connection with the undoubted affection Mrs. Sotheran entertained for her, had been to Mary always unaccountable, and of late years, and since she had begun to think for herself, even mysterious. Mr. Sotheran had now long been dead, the children (of whom Charley was the youngest) had followed their father to the grave, and there was plenty of room in the cottage at Letcombe Dottrell for Mary Marvon. Yet she had never been invited thither.

Mary's school, although not a fashionable one, had been a high-class establishment. She had been well treated, well brought up, and had wanted for nothing. Mrs. Sotheran's explanation of the matter was that only a moderate sum had been placed in her hands as provision for the orphan, and that it had been Mrs. Marvon's dying wish that it should be expended so as to shield her daughter's youth from the pangs and pains of poverty (from which she had herself suffered bitterly), and to fit her as best might be for the battle of life. There was not enough for Mary to live upon, but there was enough to keep her in comfort till she could provide for her own maintenance. A few hundred pounds, as Mary vaguely understood, was all that was left to her when, at eighteen years of age, she had exchanged the modest comfort of Minerva Seminary, Harrowgate, for the splendours of Beckett House. To Mrs. Sotheran she owed—as she owed everything else—her present position, and for this she was more grateful to her than for all the rest. Not because it had opened for her the door of luxury, but for its introduction to one who had proved herself a gentle, considerate, and loving friend. Only on one subject had Mrs. Beckett and her young companion disagreed since the latter had come to share her home; namely, as regarded the young gentleman who was now escorting Mary down to luncheon. That Mr. Charles Sotheran was good-looking, good-tempered, agreeable, and very much a gentleman, Mary admitted; she had not a word to say against him except as a lover.

When Mrs. Beckett had gone on to hint that, though Charley's salary was small, and increased by no means 'by leaps and bounds,' a few strokes of her pen would soon alter all that, and that it would give her great pleasure to make them, Mary had demurely observed that Mrs. Beckett could not bestow her bounty upon a worthier object than Mr. Charles Sotheran; but that, so far as she (Mary) was concerned, he might have ten thousand a year but would still be unacceptable to her as a husband.

'Then you must be either a born-fool, Mary,' cried the widow, for the first time losing her temper with her young favourite, 'or you must have had your brain turned by romances.'

'As we were never allowed to read romances at Minerva House, my dear Mrs. Beckett,' returned Mary, cheerfully, but with a spot of red on each cheek, 'I suppose I must accept the former of your two alternatives.'

And she added a little courtesy by way of acknowledgment.

The courtesy, I think, went even further with Mrs. Beckett than her words; as a reproof, it affected her not one whit, for very rich people are rarely thin-skinned; but it showed the other's coolness and determination. Though the widow by no means gave up her object, from that moment she ceased to press it; she knew that, notwithstanding all the resources of science, there are some fruits which can never be brought on by forcing, and was compelled to believe that this was one of them. Henceforth she trusted to the sunshine and the showers: circumstance and opportunity.

As the three took their seats at the well-spread board, Charley nodded in his off-hand way to a vacant chair: 'What Banquo is sitting there?' he inquired.

'The Dornays promised to be here,' said Mrs. Beckett curtly.

'Oh, indeed, Banquo and Fleance! Then I've got one of *their* chairs.'

'Of course you have, sir; you were not expected though we are very glad to see you, and they *were*.'

'It is better to come to a feast when you are not asked,' observed Charley, with a philosophic air, 'than to be asked and not come.'

'And much better manners,' assented Mrs. Beckett, warmly. 'For my part I don't understand such conduct. Guests who come late to lunch are almost as bad as those who come late to dinner, and they are unpardonable. For my part I cannot understand why Society tolerates it.'

‘Still it is a sign of good position,’ remarked Charley, with a twinkle in his blue eyes. ‘It is only important people who venture to do it. They are titled and say to themselves, “Our host is an inferior person, so will not resent our rudeness,” or they are rich, and he owes them money and dares not.’

‘How can you be so foolish, Charley?’ said Mary reprovingly.

‘But, my dear Mary, it must be so,’ continued the young man gravely, ‘or why does the host wait for them to the inconvenience of his other guests, and though he knows the dinner is spoiling. For my part I always endure the extra half-hour with great patience for my host’s sake; for I say to myself, “His debts will be made easier to him on this account, or perhaps forgiven to him.” He can’t be so foolish or so slavish as to put up with such behaviour *for nothing*.’

‘Upon my word, I think Charley’s observations are very sensible,’ remarked Mrs. Beckett, grimly. ‘If people can get to a railway station in time, they can come in time for dinner. A quarter of an hour for the difference of clocks I do allow, but beyond that I would not wait for a Rothschild or a Royal Highness.’

‘Yes, but then you see you don’t owe Rothschild anything, Mrs. Beckett, and Royal Highnesses are always in time.’

‘Quite true,’ replied the hostess, with approval. ‘It is only your *parvenus* who take such liberties.’

‘Still there are such things as accidents,’ put in Mary, apologetically.

‘Accidents and offences,’ muttered Charley.

‘That is only another reason why nobody should wait,’ argued Mrs. Beckett; ‘I always say to persons who are so ill-bred as to be behind time, “I was sure that nothing but an accident would have detained you, and therefore we sat down.” Nobody but a madman, for example, would think of waiting for a doctor, who may be sent for at a moment’s notice. Harris, let those two dishes be taken out and kept warm.’

‘Justice tempered with mercy,’ observed Charley.

‘You are a very impudent young man,’ said the hostess smiling.

‘My dear Mrs. Beckett, you are altogether in error: it is native shyness; a thing that is often mistaken for sheer impertinence. I should not have dreamt of coming here to-day for example—and without an invitation—and especially at luncheon time’ (his hostess was hospitality itself, but here she smiled satirically), ‘if I had not had something to communicate to you of the last importance. I had news to-day from Letcombe Dottrell.’

'Good news I hope,' inquired Mrs. Beckett with interest. 'The last time I heard from your mother, she wrote in what was for her fairly good spirits.'

'She's lost them now, poor thing!' sighed the young man.

'But what has happened?' cried Mary. 'I heard from her only the other day. I am quite sure there's not much the matter, Charley, or, to do you justice, you would have told us long ago, instead of talking such nonsense.'

'That is the first civil word you have spoken to me, Mary; I'm so much obliged. It is so nice to hear you say you believe I have some natural affection. It puts one quite on a level with the brutes.'

'Will you tell us your news, sir?' broke in Mrs. Beckett, impatiently. 'Though we care nothing about *you*, you know how interested we both are in your dear mother. If you kept her in a state of suspense like this it would frighten her to death.'

'That's just what's the matter with her,' answered Charley. 'She *is* almost frightened to death, and no wonder. There's a giant at Letcombe Dottrell.'

'A what?' exclaimed both ladies simultaneously.

'A giant! eight feet, nine feet, ten feet—I don't know how many feet he is—who takes his seven-leagued strides about the parish quite composedly. And he don't live in a caravan either, as you may think, but at the hall itself. He is Mr. Beryl Paton's last *protégé*.'

'Oh, Charley, this is too absurd!' ejaculated Mrs. Beckett.

'It's as true as that I sit here, madam, eating apricot omelette. In addition to the Archaeologist, the Metaphysician, and the Everythingarians, whom the squire has gathered about him, there is now—last, but by no means least—a Giant.'

'But why? There is nothing in being nine feet high, or even ten feet, to excite good Mr. Paton's sympathies. There must be merit, or at least presumed merit, or some pitiful misfortune to do that.'

'I don't know about that, Mrs. Beckett; perhaps he's an orphan giant; but there he *is*. Looking down the cottagers' chimneys as he takes his walks abroad; and, what is worse, into the bedroom windows at the rectory. Mr. Wells has complained about it, but the giant says he can't help it; it's his natural focus; he's not in the same plane with his fellow-creatures.'

'Why, Mr. Paton must be going mad!' exclaimed Mrs. Beckett.

‘Going?’ echoed the young man; ‘a less charitable person would have said gone.’

‘How shocking! Why, they say he owns half the county.’

‘Yes; that’s what of course makes the case so very distressing.’ Not a muscle of the speaker’s lips moved in the direction of a smile; nor did his hostess suspect the young man’s seriousness for an instant, but Mary shot at him a reproving glance. ‘Do you think it good taste,’ it said, or seemed to him to say, ‘to laugh at the weaknesses of so good a friend before her very face?’

‘But where on earth, Charley, did Mr. Paton first see the creature?’

‘Well, one would think by my mother’s description that he must have seen him always; that it was impossible for such a portent, being in the same hemisphere, to avoid observation. But, as a matter of fact, Mr. Paton found him in a caravan. You know his passion for the wonders of nature; and, attracted by some advertisement of a straight-haired negress, he came upon this prodigy. Of course he was charmed with him, and expressed his astonishment that so great a man should not only condescend to be exhibited with the African lady and for the same moderate charge of a penny, but should put up with a smaller type in their caravan advertisement. This roused the giant’s ambition; he struck for higher wages and a separate establishment, and on his master’s declining his terms, came straight away to Mr. Paton as to his natural adviser and protector. The excitement in the neighbourhood is prodigious, and you may imagine the sensation his arrival at the hall has created in the Happy Family itself.’

‘Oh dear! dear! I can indeed,’ gasped the widow, now fairly sobbing with laughter. ‘You have never seen Mr. Paton and the *ménage* at the hall, Mary, or you would know how to appreciate this. But of course this creature is not going to *stop*, Charley,—large as the house is, where can they put him?’

‘I am sure I don’t know; perhaps Mr. Paton will build a wing—’

At this moment, and while the air was rippling with mirth, the door opened, and in a voice as though he were introducing the guests to a funeral feast, the butler announced ‘Mr. Dornay and Mr. Ralph Dornay.’

CHAPTER III.

DEFIANCE.

THERE are few social crimes more exasperating—at all events to the *raconteur*—than the entrance of an outsider into a room where an excellent story is in course of narration. A Newfoundland dog coming out of the water and shaking himself over your light summer costume is nothing to it. It is an interruption not only unpardonable, but irreparable ; let the newcomer be as anxious to mend matters as he may, the story is spoilt. Nothing can bring back ‘the splendour to the grass, the glory to the flower,’ or set Humpty Dumpty on his legs again. This should be borne in mind by all those folks who, having the intention to give intellectual pleasure (which few of them have), are wont to ask some of their friends to ‘dinner,’ and others ‘in the evening.’ The former portion of the company are at their ease ; they have established a mutual understanding and formed a regular regiment with their watchwords and their countersigns ; the others are raw recruits, and can never be welcomed as comrades.

It was not easy to discomfit Mr. Charles Sotheran, but the arrival of these newcomers made him exceedingly angry, and the more so because it was easy to perceive that his hostess and Miss Mary by no means shared his displeasure. Mrs. Beckett’s welcome to them was indeed tinged with irritation : ‘So you are come at last,’ she said, but it was in a tone which implied that late was better than never, and the pressure of her hand was in both cases very reassuring. Miss Marvon said nothing but ‘Good morning,’ but she said it with her brightest smile, and her hand remained longer in that of Mr. Edgar Dornay (or so Mr. Sotheran thought) than the occasion at all demanded.

Mr. Edgar was the younger of the two visitors. A tall, well-favoured fellow enough save for a slight touch of effeminacy or dandyism. His slight black moustache was twirled into points so sharp that they might have threaded the eye of a needle ; he had a frameless, stringless glass, which stuck in his eye with the tenacity of a limpet, and he spoke with an elaborate slowness which seemed to suggest the extremity of exhaustion. But he had an intelligent face nevertheless, and what he said was well expressed.

Mr. Dornay the elder was Edgar’s uncle, and twice his age—the one being fifty, the other twenty-five—but there was no such

disproportion of years in their appearance. Edgar's quiet ways and well-considered speech would have better suited one of an elder generation; his manner was essentially mature; it was only in his smile that youth was manifested. He did not often smile, but when he did so, one acknowledged that a man could be beautiful: he reminded you of the Sun-god. Now Mr. Dornay senior's smile was the worst part of him. He performed the operation, as the Scotch gentleman acknowledged that he joked, 'with difficulty,' for fear of showing certain false teeth. It is terrible to reflect that when one grows old even a smile loses its charm. It is nature's hint, perhaps, that it is time that our laughing days were over, but it is a very grim one.

When Ralph Dornay did not smile, or smiled with care, he was an attractive object, and not the least like an uncle. His age might have been guessed at forty, and his figure, set off by a dark-blue frock coat, and an irreproachable white waistcoat, was that of a man still younger. His eye was bright, his voice cheery, and his speech gay and fluent. One would have set him down as a soldier of the genial old-fashioned type, or one of those clever Irishmen who have contrived to smother their brogue. As a matter of fact, he was of no occupation, and an Englishman. He belonged to an ancient family, of which his nephew was the chief, and he regarded him with great respect accordingly. If it could not be said of him that he passed his life in defending Edgar's character, he was always ready to break a lance for him against the many antagonists whom the young man's airs and graces evoked. And this was the more creditable to him as he could derive no material benefit from such championship. When the junior branches of old families are in these days demonstrative in their attachment to the head of their house, he has generally something to give them. Though the feudal system is extinguished, human nature is much the same as it used to be; the difference is in degree and kind. Even a duke can now hardly ensure protection and immunity for the peccadillos of his vassals; but even in less ambitious quarters there are some good things going still, and for the maintenance of family loyalty there is no such preserving pickle as expectations. Now Edgar Dornay, though in possession of Cliffe Park, the hereditary dwelling-place of his race, could not afford to live there even if he had wished to do so, which was, however, far from being the case. The estate was mortgaged up to the hilt, and burdened with all sorts of payments to certain elderly relatives and connections, to

whom the expression 'first come, first served,' was much more than a phrase. The present head of the family was in fact less well provided for than the branches, one of whom was Uncle Ralph himself. What he had was not very much, it is true ; but when one is prudent and careful to spend every shilling upon one's own needs, a little money may be made to go a great way. He had certainly no hope of any increase from his nephew's garner.

Yet there were some who denied that Uncle Ralph's feudal attachment was altogether disinterested, since it was to his nephew's friendship that he owed his place in society. Edgar Dornay was not popular among his own sex, but his very unpopularity was in some sort a tribute to his importance ; men do not take the trouble to dislike the insignificant, and Edgar had made a certain position for himself. Without being a preacher of aesthetics, he could talk its jargon, and thoroughly understood the art of persuading folks that they are catching gleams of the Unintelligible when in reality they only understand what you are saying about it. The women who wished to be thought artistic, philosophic, and also exceptionally well dressed, adored him. Women of a higher type he caught with another springe. With them he was as frank as with the others he was obscure ; each one was flattered with the idea that he only 'spread himself' for her, and laid bare the aspirations of a noble nature which were concealed from the multitude by a mask of reticence and pedantry. For the rest, he was not without his good points ; though Mr. Charles Sotheran could never perceive them. The one young gentleman had something too much of nature about him, the other a great deal too much of art. They mixed together no better than water and sulphur, and it was no spoon that could smooth matters between them. Mrs. Beckett had confided to Mary that she always felt on thorns when they were in each other's company ; and it was because she had been expecting the Dornays that afternoon that 'Charley' had not been received with his usual cordial welcome. The whole matter had been clear to him directly their names were mentioned, and easily accounted for the bitterness with which he had spoken of the Unpunctual. A vice never seems so reprehensible as when it is practised by those we dislike.

When the Dornays entered, Sotheran rose from his seat and took his leave.

'So soon ?' said Mrs. Beckett in her kindest tone.

The tone he knew was to make amends for his voluntary exile ; the words were a mere compliment.

‘You will give my love to your dear mother when you write,’ said Mary, warmly.

He nodded, and smiled grimly as though he were thinking ‘I haven’t got it to give,’ or perhaps because he felt that he was leaving her with a happier rival.

A few words of kindness too were given him by the hostess after his departure. ‘What a bright fellow Charley is; I really don’t know anyone with such a flow of spirits.’

To which Mr. Dornay the elder replied: ‘Quite true, a most engaging young man;’ and his nephew yawned approval.

These tributes to the departed having been duly paid, the company proceeded to discuss their usual topics. The conversation was not intellectually above the level of that which takes place at most afternoon teas, which, while ranging from Shakespeare to the musical glasses, has a decided tendency towards the latter: though, thanks to the food and wine, it had perhaps more vigour and spirit. Edgar spoke with severity against some new theory of admitting the principle of humour into decoration; alluded to the fancy alphabet, with its dropped H in a well-known dining-room at Kensington; and animadverted against gargoyles in architecture. Though his views were far from lucid they were well expressed, and gave almost the same impression of solidity (though they had none) as a stereoscope; the red light of a chemist’s shop under similar circumstances—i.e. in a dense fog—assumes the resemblance of the sun. Uncle Ralph, though to all appearances rapt in admiration of his nephew’s eloquence, understood not one syllable of it, and presently the widow herself ‘dropped off gorged’ with so much splendid colouring, and observed in a low tone to him—

‘You were at Ascot of course, Mr. Dornay, on Thursday?’

‘No, not I; the Derby is my only dissipation in that way;’ then added in a low voice, ‘Edgar was there, I am sorry to say, and, as usual, unfortunate.’

‘How naughty he is!’ said the widow, looking towards the young man with more pity, one would say, for his bad luck than reprehension of his bad habits. ‘I shall take the opportunity of giving him a lecture. Mary, I see Mr. Dornay has no flower in his buttonhole; choose him one from the conservatory.’

The observation of course referred to Uncle Ralph; Mr. Edgar Dornay would as soon think of coming out without a flower in his buttonhole as without his hat. Mary rose at once to obey, or oblige, her hostess. It was curious, but short as was the interval

that had elapsed since Mrs. Beckett's attention had been diverted from decorative art, its high priest had ended his dissertation upon it, and was now conversing with Mary in low tones upon some other subject—to judge from her look, at least an equally attractive one. As she rose, he too left his chair, and having opened for her the glass-door of the conservatory—hardly a sitting-room in Beckett House was without one—was about to follow her into it when the widow called him back, in a tone which could not be gainsaid.

‘You are an arbiter of taste, Mr. Edgar, as everyone knows, but surely your uncle is the best judge of what flower he prefers for his own coat.’

So Uncle Ralph took his place by the young lady's side, closing the door behind them, while the widow and Edgar were left *tête-à-tête* together. A glass-door is a non-conductor of sound, but one can see through it; and as Mr. Ralph Dornay wished to have a few words with his companion in private, he made a pretended admiration for southern plants and trees his excuse for straying with her beyond the floral portion of the conservatory, and among the tropical vegetation. Though the old powers of fern seed to render one invisible are scoffed at in these days, there is no doubt of ferns doing it if they are but tall enough; and the same, even without that reservation, may be said of palms.

‘Do you know the language of flowers, Miss Mary?’ inquired Uncle Ralph in significant tones.

‘When I was a child I learnt it,’ she answered indifferently, but with an inner sense of expectancy nevertheless, that it cost her some pains to conceal. She did not anticipate that Mr. Dornay was going to make love to her, but there was something in his voice which, in connection with what she knew of him, led her to fear—or hope—that he was about to speak of love.

‘Then you know what the palm signifies,’ he continued, looking up at the branches that canopied them. It was observable that throughout their interview Mr. Dornay always did look either up or down, and never at the face of his companion, so that a spectator (who did not hear him) would have said, ‘This gentleman thinks of nothing but trees and flowers.’

‘The palm indicates victory,’ said Mary quietly.

‘Just so. I am here to say that it lies within your grasp.’

‘I do not understand you, Mr. Dornay.’

‘I think you do. But it is only natural—or at all events prudent—that you should affect unconsciousness. You imagine

that you are in the presence of an enemy, and are inclined to look upon even his gifts with suspicion.'

'I understand you now, Mr. Dornay,' she replied, and this time very coldly, 'even less than before.'

'Then your change of tone belies you, my dear young lady,' he answered curtly; 'come, the opportunity that has been afforded for our speaking together must needs be short; do not let us waste time in fencing. You will admit, I suppose, at least this much, that you love my nephew. Your face indeed tells me so; for while I speak of him it has changed as though this white camellia had become a red one. But I have known it long ago; Edgar and I have no secrets from each other.'

'I am very sure that your nephew never told you—what you have just now had the impertinence to imply.'

'Quite true, Miss Mary. He only told me that he loved *you*; I took it for granted that there was reciprocity; the theory of "the most favoured nation" holds equally good with individuals. I must needs add, in spite of your disclaimer, that you knew that I knew it. Confess, now, that you have hitherto considered me as—well, not as an enemy perhaps, but an antagonist, an obstacle, but for which the course of true love would have run more smoothly. I have treated you, never, I hope, with disrespect, but in a manner, I confess it, that may have suggested hostility.'

The girl looked up at him with disdain; the expression was lost upon him, for he was regarding an orange on its tree with all the attention of an intending purchaser; but he could not escape the scornfulness of her tone.

'You have treated me, Mr. Dornay,' she said, 'I do not say with studied indifference, but with that indifference which is natural to you when you are addressing persons of no consequence, and from whom you can reap no benefit.'

'Bitter, bitter!' returned the other with a reproachful look at the golden fruit; 'to think that a thing so beautiful should have pips in it.'

'As to your being an obstacle,' she continued, 'if anything which such as you can say can turn a man's heart from her he loves, and induce him to give her up, for her own sake he had better do so: for if she be a true woman, let her be ever so poor, he would not be worthy of her.'

'Heroics,' muttered the other contemptuously; 'you should speak them in blank verse.' Blank or not, however, there had been something in her words that had gone home to him, for his

voice trembled with rage as he added, 'Upon my life, young woman, you are not very conciliatory!'

'It would be useless for me to be so, even if I felt inclined, which I do not,' was the quick rejoinder. 'Conciliation with some people has only the effect of encouraging them to tread on you.'

'I recognise the sentiment, Miss Mary, which I heard expressed the other day—only more in the rough—by the young gentleman who has just taken his leave of us. I would respectfully advise you—for the object you have at heart—not to sit at the feet of that youthful Gamaliel; Edgar and I do not like him.'

'Very likely. To one at least of you I can imagine his independence of character being very unwelcome.'

'In a clerk of the Probate Office, of tender years, I must confess it seems to me somewhat out of place,' answered Dornay. 'On the other hand it is an easy *rôle* to play, and admits of great self-indulgence in the way of impertinence; nor do I lose sight of the fact that Mr. Charles Sotheran may think it acceptable to a certain person as an agreeable change from the flattery and adulation that she meets with elsewhere.'

'Fresh air after incense! Well, that is very complimentary,' said Mary, smiling for the first time.

'I should rather call it pumped air,' said Mr. Dornay. 'However, Mr. Sotheran is not worth debate. What I wish to say is, that however right you may have hitherto been with respect to my feelings towards you as regards my nephew, they have undergone a complete change. I have done my best to oppose your union with him and have failed. I lay down my arms and acknowledge myself vanquished. Henceforth I am upon his side and yours. If you will not permit me to be your friend—'

She shook her head and drew back: 'I mistrust you, Mr. Dornay,' she said coldly.

'Edgar told me that you were frankness itself, and begad he's right!' exclaimed the other admiringly. 'If he had but half your determination of character he would be in a very different position; but he is so damned weak!—I beg your pardon for the expression, Miss Marvon.'

She bowed: 'You forget to whom you are apologising, sir; I am only a dependent.'

'Very true, but you are going to be Mrs. Dornay,' observed the other naïvely. 'Now, my dear young lady, do be reasonable,' he continued remonstratingly. 'If we can never be friends—which is your suggestion, not mine, remember—at least let us be allies.'

When you become my nephew's wife, consider how inconvenient—not to put it more strongly—this mutual distrust will be to both of us. You will have great influence, no doubt; but I am the nearest relation, and should anything occur to shake the pillars of domestic peace, as Edgar calls it, he will naturally look to me for advice. Then I may do you a good turn.'

'I do not believe you are picturing me as your nephew's wife at all, Mr. Dornay,' was the girl's quiet reply.

'I am. Upon my soul and honour I am!' put in the other vehemently. 'As sure as I breathe I will do my very best to bring about your marriage. That is what I have come here to say, so help me Heaven!'

'It may be so. But you have something else to say. You have omitted to name the price I am to pay for your valuable assistance.' It could not have been the effect of sunlight because they both stood in the shade; though those who knew him best would certainly have ascribed it to some atmospheric illusion;—but here Mr. Ralph Dornay blushed.

'I don't know what you mean, Miss Mary,' he answered; 'but of course there are considerations. I have hinted to you how we can, as near connections, be mutually useful to one another in the future.'

'And in the mean time?' said the girl scornfully. 'Is there nothing I can do for you in the mean time?'

'Nothing. You have already said, though in a manner that I hope your better nature has already repented of, that you could be of no advantage to me.'

'True. Still it strikes me that it may have struck you, Mr. Dornay, that circumstances may arise in which I might be of some disadvantage to you. Humble as is my position, it is just possible my advice may be asked by a certain person upon a matter in which you are very much interested; one which has only recently entered your mind, I think, but which is now monopolising it, and concerning which, to use your own candid language, I might do you a good turn—or not.'

'Well?' It was but a monosyllable, yet pregnant with significance, and the speaker for the first time looked full in his companion's face with anxious intentness.

'If I am asked my opinion of that matter, Mr. Dornay,' she continued, 'I shall give it honestly. Nothing which you can promise me; nothing which you can give me (which is very different) will deter me from so doing. On the other hand, your

secret is as safe with me as it was before you spoke. I will do you no voluntary injury, though you have done many a one to me.'

'I never have,' he murmured.

'Yes, sir; for slights, humiliations, even neglect itself, to one like me, are injuries. Though you used no daggers you have spoken them designedly, and of malice prepense; words that lie as ready to the tongue of the upstart and the coward, as does the dagger to the hand of the assassin. I do not forgive them; I do not forget them; but I should scorn myself as I scorn you if they suggested retaliation.—And now that we clearly understand one another, what flower shall I gather for your buttonhole, Mr. Dornay?'

Without a word he pointed to the nearest flower, which happened to be a blush rose. She clipped it with her scissors, and gave it to him; then turned and led the way back to the dining-room.

CHAPTER IV.

LEAP-YEAR.

IT is not the scene which dictates the sentiment, or the conversation between Uncle Ralph and Mary Marvon among the ferns and flowers would have been of a very different kind to that we have described.

The dining-room, on the other hand, though a very noble apartment, would hardly have suggested by association—not to mention the *débris* of lunch which still strewed the table—any tender topic; yet no sooner did the other couple leave it, and the widow find herself alone with Mr. Edgar Dornay, than her voice and manner softened, and her face became full of a gentle earnestness and sympathy.

'My dear Edgar,' she said, in a pleasant voice, 'I have got something very serious to say to you.'

He took the chair beside her to which she had beckoned him, and answered with his brightest smile, 'Your preface frightens me, my dear Mrs. Beckett; but you don't *look* serious, which gives me consolation.'

'I wish to look serious, Edgar; vexed and disappointed too; nay, I would be downright angry with you, only somehow I never can. I am sure I don't know what it is that makes me so kind—nay blind—to your failings?'

She spoke half interrogatively, as though if he had any theory upon that point she would be glad to hear it, but he only shook his head.

'That is my best chance with you and with everybody,' he said hastily, 'that they should shut their eyes, or at the worst wink at my peccadillos; for they are many.'

'Well, it is something that you show humility,' she answered, though with a touch of disappointment mingling with that faint praise; 'and I do believe they are but peccadillos, Edgar.'

'I don't know,' he answered; 'some moralists would be very severe on me; but you, I venture to think, are not a hanging judge.'

'By which you mean, I suppose, you naughty man, that I would not hang *you*?' She tapped his hand lightly with her fingers, and looked at him certainly with an expression very different from that of a judge when he puts on the black cap. Mrs. Beckett had not actually taken to caps, but, perhaps as much for concealment as for ornament, a piece of lace, scarce the size of her own plump hand, was arranged becomingly enough in her brown hair, still unmixed with grey.

'Well, yes, I venture to think you would lean to mercy's side in my case.'

'But then, Edgar, I don't believe you have ever done anything very wrong.'

'That is very good of you, though it shows an excess of charity. It is true, however, that I have never committed murder.'

'Nor suicide,' said the widow, lightly. 'Come, that's two off the list of your possible delinquencies.'

'I am not so sure about suicide,' returned the young man, laughing. 'There are some people who, if they knew all, would at least accuse me of contemplating it.'

The widow's face grew grave, and the colour rushed to her cheeks. 'What people?' she asked, in a tone of indignation.

'The world at large; you know what an interest it takes in one's private affairs.'

'Yes; how much better it imagines it understands them than oneself,' she added, contemptuously; 'for my part I have long learnt to value its opinion at its true worth.'

She took up a leaf that had fallen from the flower-stand on the table and flipped it from her with a finger snap.

'But, then, my dear Mrs. Beckett, you are above the world. This earthly ball lies at your feet.'

‘And at yours also,’ she said gravely.

‘That is true in a sense, of course, but in a very different sense,’ he rejoined thoughtfully; ‘young men are always given that comfortable assurance; but if they kick the ball—or even *at* it—they have often cause to repent of their audacity. What happens to those who “fly in the face of society,” is very similar to the fate of those sea-birds who dash themselves to pieces against the lanterns of lighthouses.’

‘That happens from their ignorance,’ observed his companion. ‘They are right enough in seeking for warmth and light. To my mind the real happiness of life lies in comfort.’

‘That is a wide term, my dear Mrs. Beckett. Your ideas of comfort, for example’—he glanced round the room, on the walls of which hung landscapes of Linnell (the widow’s favourite painter), and on whose ceiling glowed the bright hues she loved, arranged with harmonious skill—‘would to some people appear very like luxury.’

‘And why not? the more of comfort one has the better. Everything else in the way of enjoyment sooner or later fades. I have experienced it myself, Edgar; you will say, perhaps, “But you are a woman;” I doubt whether that makes much difference in the long run, but if you think otherwise, ask your uncle. He is a man of the world and thoroughly understands it.’

‘But, my dear Mrs. Beckett,’ objected the young man, ‘you have called a most damaging witness. Uncle Ralph is a martyr to fashion. His boots and, what is worse, his waistcoats are a size too small for him. He dines out continually—here, for example—where he can get no smoke after dinner, though he pines for tobacco after every meal like the bulbul for its mate; he even goes to evening parties, and from sheer exhaustion—not from dancing (he knows better than that), but from boredom—is driven to partake of bad champagne. Comfort! why, comfort is not more “scorned of devils” than it is by Uncle Ralph.’

‘I beg your pardon; he does not scorn it. On the contrary, he sacrifices himself for the present in the hope of finding himself at last in cotton wool.’

‘Indeed,’ smiled the young man. ‘Well, it may be so; you ladies have sharper eyes than we have.’

‘At all events we see further. What I wish to urge upon you is not only to think of to-day, but of to-morrow.’

‘Just so; the future,’ said Edgar, rising from his chair and pacing the room. It was evident that he had forgotten where he

was. ‘After the suicide of which we were speaking there is another life.’

‘May I ask what was the particular form of self-destruction you were contemplating?’ inquired the widow. Her eyes were on the table, her hand was busy with some crumbs that lay before her.

‘I cannot tell you that,’ replied the young man; ‘it would not be fair to others.’

There was a long silence; the widow bit her lip; she looked disappointed, vexed, like one who has been pursuing the wrong tack; she was not vexed with her companion, however, for it was in a voice even gentler than before that she once more addressed him.

‘If I may be allowed to say so, Edgar, you have two great failings—imprudence and indecision. It is about the first I wish to speak to you, that is to say, if you will listen.’

‘I beg your pardon,’ said the young man, suddenly stopping in his walk, and resuming his seat beside his companion; ‘I was lost in thought, and for the moment imagined myself at home.’

‘It was not such a very great mistake, I hope,’ was the gentle reply.

‘It was not, indeed,’ replied the other; ‘your house has been always, ever since I have had the pleasure of knowing you’ (it was some eighteen months), ‘like home; that is, it isn’t the least like it,’ he added, with ludicrous inconsistency: ‘Ralph and I live in a garret.’

‘You are always welcome, always, always,’ continued the widow earnestly, and without paying attention to this melancholy statement, ‘and will ever be so. It is here, above all, that you must come when you need help, Edgar.’

The young man coloured to the roots of his hair; the beautiful path that ran straight up the middle of it looked as if it had been newly gravelled.

‘Your advice, I know, has been always most kindly proffered,’ he answered evasively, ‘and would be most valuable if I only had the sense to take it.’

‘Advice, my dear Edgar, is what everybody is willing to give; it costs less than a gas fire and looks as warm and genial; but, though it fills the giver with a virtuous glow, the recipient is often not much the better for it. Now, when I say help, I mean it.’

‘I am sure you do,’ answered the young man, drawing lines

upon the table-cloth with one of his filbert nails, and listening with feverish impatience for the click of the glass door. A gentle perspiration, such as doctors hail in a feverish patient, bedewed his brow. He was not so much afraid of the widow—indeed, he had a very kindly regard and esteem for her—as he was distrustful of himself. He felt that a crisis was approaching which would compel him to take one of two courses which had long presented themselves to him; he had, in fact, made up his mind which to choose, only decision was abhorrent to him. It was especially abhorrent now, since the course he had determined upon would be unwelcome to his companion. His artist nature shrank from inflicting pain on anyone, but especially on himself; his position was really a painful one.

‘A little bird tells me that you had an unlucky day at Ascot,’ said the widow gently.

‘A blue bird with a white breast, was it not?’ answered the young fellow, forcing a laugh and nodding towards the conservatory. ‘It is the birds of bright plumage that talk the most, though they are not good at singing.’

‘He sings your praises, at all events, you ungrateful man; knowing, doubtless, that they are always pleasing to me.’

‘You are very good to say so, Mrs. Beckett.’

‘Was the sum a large one, may I ask, Edgar, which you so unfortunately ventured?’

Again the colour rushed to the young man’s face. ‘I am not accustomed to bet more than I can pay,’ he answered stiffly.

‘That you are not accustomed to do anything dishonourable, Edgar, I am well aware,’ was the gentle reply, ‘but you are very imprudent.’

‘It is my nature,’ he returned quickly. ‘People talk of “living up” to this and that; I think I may honestly say that whatever income I possessed, I should live up to the last shilling of it.’

‘Perhaps if you were very rich you would think differently,’ said the widow gravely. ‘There is a certain sense of responsibility that attaches to great wealth.’

‘I don’t think that would oppress me, whatever else might, in such a case,’ answered the young man lightly.

‘Then I am afraid you must be naturally extravagant.’

‘I am,’ he replied with a certain earnest frankness; ‘and I resent above all things any check or restraint; that is one of the reasons why I hate Cliffe Park, because it is tied up and I can’t get rid of it.’

‘But surely, Edgar,’ argued the widow gravely, ‘it must be a comfort to feel that something—though it may not be much—is made secure to you in spite of all reverses of fortune.’

‘Not a bit of it. If I could sell that wretched place to-morrow, for example, and pay these Ascot debts—not, of course, but that I *can* pay them,’ he added hastily, ‘from other sources.’

‘Just so; only it is inconvenient to part with a few thousands.’

‘It would be if I owed them,’ returned the young man, laughing; ‘most uncommonly inconvenient.’

‘Then your loss is a mere trifle,’ remarked the widow with an involuntary sigh.

‘To you it would be a mere flea-bite, my dear Mrs. Beckett,’ he replied; ‘but to me five hundred pounds is—well, five hundred pounds.’

‘You have stated the case quite correctly, Edgar; in a manner, too, that I could not have done, since it would have savoured of ostentation. As this sum is to me “a mere flea-bite,” while to pay it is to you a matter of some consequence, will you not allow me—it would be a very great pleasure—to take the privilege of an old friend?’

‘My dear Mrs. Beckett, the thing is impossible,’ exclaimed the young man, starting to his feet.

‘Nay, nay, it is certainly not impossible,’ she answered, ‘because it is as easy for me to do it, as it is for you to resume your seat.’

He bit his lip, but took the chair which she pushed gently towards him.

‘There is nothing to be offended at, surely, Edgar. When we posted to Virginia Water the other day, you thought it no humiliation, I suppose, because I paid for the postilions and the turnpikes. This carafe of water is more than I need, more than I can drink: shall I not fill your glass for you if you are thirsty. Where is the obligation?’

‘All that is different,’ murmured the young man; ‘you know it is different.’

‘Because money, forsooth, is held by foolish persons to be different from everything else. Suppose, then, I were to die to-morrow, and it was found that I had not, as the phrase goes, “forgotten” you: that it was my wish, as it *is* my wish, Edgar, Heaven knows, to make the road of life smooth for you: that I had, in short, left you half my fortune. You would accept it then; but now, when I am alive, and when the knowledge of my

having conferred some benefit upon you would give me pleasure—the greatest pleasure, perhaps, of which my mind is capable—you reject it ; you spurn it.'

'Pardon me, dear Mrs. Beckett, I do not spurn it. I appreciate your generosity exceedingly ; and, if I hesitate, it is not so much on my own account, believe me.'

'Nay, nay,' she interrupted haughtily, 'I cannot admit that plea. I am old enough—I mean I have had experience enough of life, Edgar, to be fully capable of taking care of my reputation. I know my position thoroughly ; what the world thinks of me I care not ; what it will dare to say of me is not much. They are coming in' (she looked towards the glass door). 'There is no time to speak further on this matter ; reflect upon it ; turn it over in your mind.'

'I will.'

'In the meantime I will write to you—— What, Mary, only a common rose for Mr. Dornay after all this time spent in choosing it !'

'A common rose, madam,' said Uncle Ralph, with a bow and a smile, 'like common honesty and common sense, is not so very common ; and, moreover, it stands for True Love, which is rarer still.'

(To be continued.)

Atoms, Molecules, and Ether Waves.

I.

MAN is prone to idealisation. He cannot accept as final the phenomena of the sensible world, but looks behind that world into another which rules the sensible one. From this tendency of the human mind systems of mythology and scientific theories have equally sprung. By the former the experiences of volition, passion, power, and design, manifested among ourselves, were transplanted, with the necessary modifications, into an unseen universe, from which the sway and potency of these magnified human qualities were exerted. 'In the roar of thunder and in the violence of the storm was felt the presence of a shouter and furious strikers, and out of the rain was created an Indra or giver of rain.' It is substantially the same with science, the principal force of which is expended in endeavouring to rend the veil which separates the sensible world from an ultra-sensitive one. In both cases our materials, drawn from the world of the senses, are modified by the imagination to suit intellectual needs. The 'first beginnings' of Lucretius were not objects of sense, but they were suggested and illustrated by objects of sense. The idea of atoms proved an early want on the part of minds in pursuit of the knowledge of nature. It has never been relinquished, and in our own day it is growing steadily in power and precision.

The union of bodies in fixed and multiple proportions constitutes the basis of modern atomic theory. The same compound retains, for ever, the same elements, in an unalterable ratio. We cannot produce pure water containing one part, by weight, of hydrogen and nine of oxygen; nor can we produce it when the ratio is one to ten; but we can produce it from the ratio of one to eight, and from no other. So also when water is decomposed by the electric current, the proportion, as regards volumes, is as fixed as in the case of weights. Two volumes of hydrogen and one of oxygen invariably go to the formation of water. Number and harmony, as in the Pythagorean system, are everywhere dominant in this under-world,

Following the discovery of fixed proportions we have that of *multiple* proportions. For the same compound, as above stated, the elementary factors are constant; but one elementary body often unites with another so as to form different compounds. Water, for example, is an oxide of hydrogen; but a peroxide of that substance also exists, containing exactly double the quantity of oxygen. Nitrogen also unites with oxygen in various ratios, but not in all. The union takes place, not gradually and uniformly, but by steps, a definite weight of matter being added at each step. The larger combining quantities of oxygen are thus multiples of the smaller ones. It is the same with other combinations.

We remain thus far in the region of fact: why not rest there? It might as well be asked why we do not, like our poor relations of the woods and forests, rest content with the facts of the sensible world. In virtue of our mental idiosyncrasy, we demand *why* bodies should combine in multiple proportions, and the outcome and answer of this question is the atomic theory. The definite weights of matter above referred to represent the weights of atoms, indivisible by any force which chemistry has hitherto brought to bear upon them. If matter were a *continuum*—if it were not rounded off, so to say, into these discrete atomic masses—the impassable breaches of continuity which the law of multiple proportions reveals, could not be accounted for. These atoms are what Maxwell finely calls ‘the foundation stones of the material universe’ which, amid the wreck of composite matter, ‘remain unbroken and unworn.’

A group of atoms drawn and held together by what chemists term *affinity*, is called a molecule. The ultimate parts of all compound bodies are molecules. A molecule of water, for example, consists of two atoms of hydrogen, which grasp and are grasped by one atom of oxygen. When water is converted into steam, the distances between the molecules are greatly augmented, but the molecules themselves continue intact. We must not, however, picture the constituent atoms of any molecule as held so rigidly together as to render intestine motion impossible. The interlocked atoms have still liberty of vibration, which may, under certain circumstances, become so intense as to shake the molecule asunder. Most molecules—probably all—are wrecked by intense heat, or in other words by intense vibratory motion; and many are wrecked by a very moderate heat of the proper quality. Indeed, a weak force, which bears a suitable relation to the constitution of the

molecule, can, by timely savings and accumulations, accomplish what a strong force out of relation fails to achieve.

We have here a glimpse of the world in which the physical philosopher for the most part resides. Science has been defined as 'organised common sense ;' by whom I have forgotten ; but, unless we stretch unduly the definition of common sense, I think it is hardly applicable to this world of molecules. I should be inclined to ascribe the creation of that world to inspiration rather than to what is currently known as common sense. For the natural history sciences the definition may stand—hardly for the physical and mathematical sciences.

The sensation of light is produced by a succession of waves which strike the retina in periodic intervals ; and such waves, impinging on the molecules of bodies, agitate their constituent atoms. These atoms are so small, and, when grouped to molecules, are so tightly clasped together, that they are capable of tremors equal in rapidity to those of light and radiant heat. To a mind coming freshly to these subjects, the numbers with which scientific men here habitually deal must appear utterly fantastical ; and yet, to minds trained in the logic of science, they express most sober and certain truth. The constituent atoms of molecules can vibrate to and fro millions of millions of times in a second. The waves of light and of radiant heat follow each other at similar rates through the luminiferous ether. Further, the atoms of different molecules are held together with varying degrees of tightness—they are tuned, as it were, to notes of different pitch. Suppose then light-waves, or heat-waves, to impinge upon an assemblage of such molecules, what may be expected to occur ? The same as what occurs when a piano is opened and sung into. The waves of sound select the strings which respectively respond to them—the strings, that is to say, whose rates of vibration are the same as their own—and of the general series of strings these only sound. The vibratory motion of the voice, imparted first to the air, is here taken up by the strings. It may be regarded as *absorbed*, each string constituting itself thereby a new centre of motion. Thus also, as regards the tightly locked atoms of molecules on which waves of light or radiant heat impinge. Like the waves of sound just adverted to, the waves of ether select those atoms whose periods of vibration synchronise with their own periods of recurrence, and to such atoms deliver up their motion. It is thus that light and radiant heat are absorbed.

And here the statement, though elementary, must not be

omitted, that the colours of the prismatic spectrum, which are presented in an impure form in the rainbow, are due to different rates of atomic vibration in their source, the sun. From the extreme red to the extreme violet, between which are embraced all colours visible to the human eye, the rapidity of vibration steadily increases, the length of the waves of ether produced by these vibrations diminishing in the same proportion. I say 'visible to the human eye,' because there may be eyes capable of receiving visual impression from waves which do not affect ours. There is a vast store of rays, or more correctly waves, beyond the red, and also beyond the violet, which are incompetent to excite our vision; so that could the whole length of the spectrum, visible and invisible, be seen by the same eye, its length would be vastly augmented.

I have spoken of molecules being wrecked by a moderate amount of heat of the proper quality: let us examine this point for a moment. There is a liquid called nitrite of amyl—frequently administered to patients suffering from heart disease. The liquid is volatile, and its vapour is usually inhaled by the patient. Let a quantity of this vapour be introduced into a wide glass tube, and let a concentrated beam of solar light be sent through the tube along its axis. Prior to the entry of the beam, the vapour is as invisible as the purest air. When the light enters, a bright cloud is immediately precipitated on the beam. This is entirely due to the waves of light, which wreck the nitrite of amyl molecules, the products of decomposition forming innumerable liquid particles which constitute the cloud. Many other gases and vapours are acted upon in a similar manner. Now the waves that produce this decomposition are by no means the most powerful of those emitted by the sun. It is, for example, possible to gather up the ultra-red waves into a concentrated beam, and to send it through the vapour, like the beam of light. But, though possessing vastly greater energy than the light waves, they fail to produce decomposition. Hence the justification of the statement already made, that a suitable relation must subsist between the molecules and the waves of ether to render the latter effectual.

A very impressive illustration of the decomposing power of the waves of light is here purposely chosen; but the processes of photography illustrate the same principle. The photographer, without fear, illuminates his developing room with light transmitted through red or yellow glass; but he dares not use blue glass, for blue light would decompose his chemicals. And yet

the waves of red light, measured by the amount of energy which they carry, are immensely more powerful than the waves of blue. The blue rays are usually called chemical rays—a misleading term; for, as Draper and others have taught us, the rays that produce the grandest chemical effects in nature, by decomposing the carbonic acid and water which form the nutriment of plants, are not the blue ones. In regard, however, to the salts of silver, and many other compounds, the blue rays are the most effectual. How is it then that weak waves can produce effects which strong waves are incompetent to produce? This is a feature characteristic of periodic motion. In the experiment of singing into an open piano already referred to, it is the accord subsisting between the vibrations of the voice and those of the string that causes the latter to sound. Were this accord absent, the intensity of the voice might be quintupled, without producing any response. But when voice and string are identical in pitch, the successive impulses add themselves together, and this addition renders them, in the aggregate, powerful, though individually they may be weak. In some such fashion the periodic strokes of the smaller ether waves accumulate, till the atoms on which their timed impulses impinge are jerked asunder, and what we call chemical decomposition ensues.

Savart was the first to show the influence of musical sounds upon liquid jets, and I have now to describe an experiment belonging to this class, which bears upon the present question. From a screw-tap in my little Alpine kitchen I permitted, an hour ago, a vein of water to descend into a trough, so arranging the flow that the jet was steady and continuous from top to bottom. A slight diminution of the orifice caused the continuous portion of the vein to shorten, the part further down resolving itself into drops. In my experiment, however, the vein, before it broke, was intersected by the bottom of the trough. Shouting near the descending jet produced no sensible effect upon it. The higher notes of the voice, however powerful, were also ineffectual. But when the voice was lowered to about 130 vibrations a second, the feeblest utterance of this note sufficed to shorten, by one half, the continuous portion of the jet. The responsive drops ran along the vein, pattered against the trough, and scattered a copious spray round their place of impact. When the note ceased, the continuity and steadiness of the vein were immediately restored. The formation of the drops was here periodic; and when the vibrations of the note accurately synchronised with the periods of the drops, the waves of sound aided what Plateau has proved to be the natural

tendency of the liquid cylinder to resolve itself into spherules, and virtually decomposed the vein.

I have stated, without proof, that where absorption occurs, the motion of the ether-waves is taken up by the constituent atoms of molecules. It is conceivable that the ether-waves, in passing through an assemblage of molecules, might deliver up their motion to each molecule as a whole, leaving the relative positions of the constituent atoms unchanged. But the long series of reactions, represented by the deportment of nitrite of amyl vapour, does not favour this conception ; for, were the atoms animated solely by a common motion, the molecules would not be decomposed. The fact of decomposition, then, goes to prove the atoms to be the seat of the absorption. They, in great part, take up the energy of the ether-waves, whereby their union is severed, and the building materials of the molecules are scattered abroad.

Molecules differ in stability ; some of them, though hit by waves of considerable force, and taking up the motions of these waves, nevertheless hold their own with a tenacity which defies decomposition. And here, in passing, I may say that it would give me extreme pleasure to be able to point to my researches in confirmation of the solar theory recently enunciated by my friend the President of the British Association. But though the experiments which I have made on the decomposition of vapours by light might be numbered by the thousand, I have, to my regret, encountered no fact which proves that free aqueous vapour is decomposed by the solar rays, or that the sun is re-heated by the combination of gases, in the severance of which it had previously sacrificed its heat.

II.

The memorable investigations of Leslie and Rumford, and the subsequent classical researches of Melloni, dealt, in the main, with the properties of radiant heat ; while in my investigations, radiant heat, instead of being regarded as an end, was employed as a means of exploring molecular condition. On this score little could be said until the gaseous form of matter was brought under the dominion of experiment. This was first effected in 1859, when it was proved that gases and vapours, notwithstanding the open door which the distances between their molecules might be supposed to offer to the heat waves, were, in many cases, able

effectually to bar their passage. It was then proved that while the elementary gases and their mixtures, including among the latter the earth's atmosphere, were almost as pervious as a vacuum to ordinary radiant heat, the compound gases were one and all absorbers, some of them taking up with intense avidity the motion of the ether-waves.

A single illustration will here suffice. Let a mixture of hydrogen and nitrogen in the proportion of three to fourteen by weight, be enclosed in a space through which are passing the heat rays from an ordinary stove. The gaseous mixture offers no measurable impediment to the rays of heat. Let the hydrogen and nitrogen now unite to form the compound ammonia. A magical change instantly occurs. The number of atoms present remains unchanged. The transparency of the compound is quite equal to that of the mixture prior to combination. No change is perceptible to the eye, but the keen vision of experiment soon detects the fact that the perfectly transparent and highly attenuated ammonia resembles pitch or lampblack in its behaviour to the rays of heat.

There is probably boldness, if not rashness, in the attempt to make these ultra-sensible actions generally intelligible, and I may have already transgressed the limits beyond which the writer of a familiar article cannot profitably go. There may, however, be a remnant of readers willing to accompany me, and for their sakes I proceed. A hundred compounds might be named which, like the ammonia, are transparent to light, but more or less opaque—often, indeed, intensely opaque—to the rays of heat from obscure sources. Now the difference between these latter rays and the light-rays is purely a difference of period of vibration. The vibrations in the case of light are more rapid, and the ether waves which they produce are shorter, than in the case of obscure heat. Why then should the ultra-red waves be intercepted by bodies like ammonia, while the more rapidly recurrent waves of the whole visible spectrum are allowed free transmission? The answer I hold to be that, by the act of chemical combination, the vibrations of the constituent atoms of the molecules are rendered so sluggish as to synchronise with the motions of the longer waves. They resemble loaded piano-strings, or slowly descending water-jets, requiring notes of low pitch to set them in motion.

The influence of synchronism between the 'radiant' and the 'absorbent' is well shown by the behaviour of carbonic acid gas. To the complex emission from our heated stove, carbonic acid

would be one of the most transparent of gases. For such waves olefiant gas, for example, would vastly transcend it in absorbing power. But when we select a radiant with whose waves the atoms of carbonic acid are in accord, the case is entirely altered. Such a radiant is found in a carbonic oxide flame, where the radiating body is really hot carbonic acid. To this special radiation carbonic acid is the most opaque of gases.

And here we find ourselves face to face with a question of great delicacy and importance. Both as a radiator, and as an absorber, carbonic acid is, in general, a feeble gas. It is beaten in this respect by chloride of methyl, ethylene, ammonia, sulphurous acid, nitrous oxide, and marsh gas. Compared with some of these gases, its behaviour in fact approaches that of elementary bodies. May it not help to explain their neutrality? The doctrine is now very generally accepted that atoms of the same kind may, like atoms of different kinds, group themselves to molecules. Affinity exists between hydrogen and hydrogen, and between chlorine and chlorine, as well as between hydrogen and chlorine. We have thus homogeneous molecules as well as heterogeneous molecules, and the neutrality so strikingly exhibited by the elements may be due to a quality of which carbonic acid furnishes a partial illustration. The paired atoms of the elementary molecules may be so out of accord with the periods of the ultra-red waves—the vibrating periods of these atoms may, for example, be so rapid—as to disqualify them both from emitting those waves, and from accepting their energy. This would practically destroy their power, both as radiators and absorbers. I have reason to know that a distinguished authority has for some time entertained this hypothesis.

We must, however, refresh ourselves by occasional contact with the solid ground of experiment, and an interesting problem now lies before us awaiting experimental solution. Suppose 200 men to be scattered equably throughout the length of Pall Mall. By timely swerving now and then a runner from St. James's Palace to the Athenæum Club might be able to get through such a crowd without much hindrance. But supposing the men to close up so as to form a dense file crossing Pall Mall from north to south: such a barrier might seriously impede, or entirely stop, the runner. Instead of a crowd of men, let us imagine a column of molecules under small pressure, thus resembling the sparsely distributed crowd. Let us suppose the column to shorten, without change in the quantity of matter, until the molecules are so squeezed together as to resemble the closed file across Pall

Mall. During these changes of density, would the action of the molecules upon a beam of heat passing among them, at all resemble the action of the crowd upon the runner?

We must answer this question by direct experiment. To form our molecular crowd we place, in the first instance, a gas or vapour in a tube 38 inches long, the ends of which are closed with circular windows, air-tight, but formed of a substance which offers little or no obstruction to the calorific waves. Calling the measured value of a heat-beam passing through this tube 100, we carefully determine the proportionate part of this total absorbed by the molecules in the tube. We then gather precisely the same number of molecules into a column 10·8 inches long, the one column being thus three and a half times the length of the other. In this case also we determine the quantity of radiant heat absorbed. By the depression of a barometric column, we can easily and exactly measure out the proper quantities of the gaseous body. It is obvious that 1 mercury inch of vapour, in the long tube, would represent precisely the same amount of matter—or, in other words, the same number of molecules—as $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in the short one; while 2 inches of vapour in the long tube would be equivalent to 7 inches in the short one.

The experiments have been made with the vapours of two very volatile liquids, namely, sulphuric ether and hydride of amyl. The sources of radiant heat were, in some cases, an incandescent lime cylinder, and in others a spiral of platinum wire, heated to bright redness by an electric current. One or two of the measurements will suffice for the purposes of illustration. First then, as regards the lime light: for 1 inch of pressure in the long tube, the absorption was 18·4 per cent. of the total beam; while for 3·5 inches of pressure in the short tube, the absorption was 18·8 per cent., or almost exactly the same as the former. For 2 inches pressure, moreover, in the long tube, the absorption was 25·7 per cent.; while for 7 inches, in the short tube, it was 25·6 per cent. of the total beam. Thus closely do the absorptions in the two cases run together—thus emphatically do the molecules assert their individuality. As long as their number is unaltered, their action on radiant heat is unchanged. Passing from the lime-light to the incandescent spiral, the absorptions of the smaller equivalent quantities, in the two tubes, were 23·5 and 23·4 per cent.; while the absorptions of the larger equivalent quantities were 32·1 and 32·6 per cent. respectively. This constancy of absorption, when the

density of a gas or vapour is varied, I have called 'the conservation of molecular action.'

But it may be urged that the change of density, in these experiments, has not been carried far enough to justify the enunciation of a law of molecular physics. The condensation into less than one-third of the space does not, it may be said, quite represent the close file of men across Pall Mall. Let us therefore push matters to extremes, and continue the condensation till the vapour has been squeezed into a liquid. To the pure change of density we shall then have added the change in the state of aggregation. The experiments here are more easily described than executed; nevertheless, by sufficient training, scrupulous accuracy, and minute attention to details, success may be ensured. Knowing the respective specific gravities, it is easy, by calculation, to determine the condensation requisite to reduce a column of vapour of definite density and length to a layer of liquid of definite thickness. Let the vapour, for example, be that of sulphuric ether, and let it be introduced into our 38-inch tube till a pressure of 7.2 inches of mercury is obtained. Or let it be hydride of amyl, of the same length, and at a pressure of 6.6 inches. Supposing the column to shorten, the vapour would become proportionally denser, and would, in each case, end in the production of a layer of liquid exactly 1 millimeter in thickness.¹ Conversely, a layer of liquid ether, or of hydride of amyl, of this thickness, were its molecules freed from the thrall of cohesion, would form a column of vapour 38 inches long, at a pressure of 7.2 inches in the one case, and of 6.6 inches in the other. In passing through the liquid layer, a beam of heat encounters the same number of molecules as in passing through the vapour layer; and our problem is to decide, by experiment, whether, in both cases, the molecule is not the dominant factor, or whether its power is augmented, diminished, or otherwise overridden by the state of aggregation.

Using the sources of heat before mentioned, and employing diathermanous lenses, or silvered mirrors, to render the rays from those sources parallel, the absorption of radiant heat was determined, first for the liquid layer, and then for its equivalent vaporous layer. As before, a representative experiment or two will suffice for illustration. When the substance was sulphuric ether, and the source of radiant heat an incandescent platinum spiral, the absorption by the column of vapour was found to be

¹ The millimeter is $\frac{1}{25}$ th of an inch.

66.7 per cent. of the total beam. The absorption of the equivalent liquid layer was next determined, and found to be 67.2 per cent. Liquid and vapour, therefore, differed from each other only 0.5 per cent.: in other words, they were practically identical in their action. The radiation from the lime-light has a greater power of penetration through transparent substances than that from the spiral. In the emission from both of these sources we have a mixture of obscure and luminous rays; but the ratio of the latter to the former, in the limelight, is greater than in the spiral; and, as the very meaning of transparency is perviousness to the luminous rays, the emission in which these rays are predominant must pass most freely through transparent substances. Increased transmission implies diminished absorption; and, accordingly, the respective absorptions of ether vapour and liquid ether, when the limelight was used, instead of being 66.7 and 67.2 per cent., were found to be—

Vapour	•	•	•	33.3 per cent.
Liquid	•	•	•	33.3 , ,

no difference whatever being observed between the two states of aggregation. The same was found true of hydride of amyl.

This constancy and continuity of the action exerted on the waves of heat when the state of aggregation is changed, I have called 'the thermal continuity of liquids and vapours.' It is, I think, the strongest illustration hitherto adduced of the conservation of molecular action.

Thus, by new methods of search, we reach a result which was long ago enunciated on other grounds. Water is well known to be one of the most opaque of liquids to the waves of obscure heat. But if the relation of liquids to their vapours be that here shadowed forth; if in both cases the molecule asserts itself to be the dominant factor, then the dispersion of the water of our seas and rivers, as invisible aqueous vapour in our atmosphere, does not annul the action of the molecules on solar and terrestrial heat. Both are profoundly modified by this constituent; but as aqueous vapour is transparent, which, as before explained, means pervious to the luminous rays, and as the emission from the sun abounds in such rays, while from the earth's emission they are wholly absent, the vapour-screen offers a far greater hindrance to the outflow of heat from the earth towards space than to the inflow from the sun towards the earth. The elevation of our planet's temperature is therefore a direct consequence of the exist-

ence of aqueous vapour in our air. Flimsy as that garment may appear, were it removed, terrestrial life would probably perish through the consequent refrigeration.

I have thus endeavoured to give some account of a recent incursion into that ultra-sensible world mentioned at the outset of this paper. Invited by my publishers, with whom I have now worked in harmony for a period of twenty years, to send some contribution to the first number of their new Magazine, I could not refuse them this proof of my good-will.

J. TYNDALL.

ALP LUSGEN :

September 4, 1882.

Lexington.

THE Bostonian spring being more than usually embittered against mankind this year, we left our quarters in town very early, and went to pass the month of May in the pretty and historic village of Lexington. It lies ten or twelve miles inland ; it is not only a little beyond the worst of the east wind, but is just a little too far from Boston to be strictly suburban in aspect ; and thanks chiefly to an absence of water-power (a clear brown brook, that you may anywhere jump across, idles through the pastures unmolested by a mill-wheel), Lexington has not yet been overtaken by the unpicturesque prosperity which has befallen so many New England villages. It has no manufactures of any sort, neither shoes nor cotton, nor boxes, nor barrels, nor watches, nor furniture ; it is still a farming-town, such as you find in the Massachusetts or New Hampshire hills, and is not yet a market-gardening town like those which lie nearer the city. The ancestral meadows are still mown by the great-great-grandchildren of those who cleared them of the primeval forest, and who, having begun to build into fences and bury in the earth the granite boulders plentifully bestrewing its surface, invented rather than discovered their reluctant fertility. In many parts of New England the Western jokes about sharpening the sheep's noses for their greater convenience in getting at the herbage between the rocks, and about firing the seed-corn into the ground with a shot-gun, do not seem so grotesquely imaginative. More than once at nightfall, as I drove along country roads, the flocks and herds, lying under the orchard trees, have turned on nearer inspection to companies of boulders ; in the hill towns I have seen stone walls six feet wide, titanic barriers thrown up in the farmer's despair of otherwise getting rid of the stones scattered over his fields ; and these gifts of the glacial period are often interred by the ton in pits dug for the purpose. It is said that the soil thus twice conquered from the wilderness is very rich and strong, and Lexington was by no means so barren originally as some other towns ; but its fertility must once have been greater than it now is, or else people must once

have been satisfied with less fertility to the acre than contents them at present, for I could not see any agricultural reason why Lexington should first have been known as Cambridge Farms. Doubtless the name did not imply that it was the fittest part of the township for farming; Beverly Farms and Salem Farms and Cambridge Farms must have all been so called because they were hamlets remote from the principal village. At any rate Lexington once formed part of our university town, but was set off long before the revolutionary days in which it achieved a separate celebrity.

In New England the 'town' is the township, and there are some 'towns' in which there is no village at all; but at Lexington there was early a little grouping of houses; and for two hundred and fifty years the local feeling has been growing more and more intense, until it can be said at last to be now somewhat larger than the place. This is not an uncommon result; as Dr. Holmes has remarked, American cities and villages all like to think of themselves as the 'good old' this and that; but at Lexington more than anywhere else out of Italy I felt that the village was to its people the *patria*. With us the great Republic is repeated and multiplied in several smaller and diminishing republican governments, each subordinate to the larger, all over the land; and ever since its separation from Cambridge, Lexington has, like other New England towns, had its little autonomy. Twice a year the citizens convene and legislate in town meetings; and three Selectmen annually chosen see that the popular will is carried out and transact the whole business of the town government. This microcosm of democracy is the more interesting in Lexington because it is in many things an image of what the New England town was a hundred years ago—a sufficiently remote antiquity with us. The Irish have their foothold there as everywhere; but they have not acquired much land; and though they remain faithful Catholics, they have Americanised in such degree that it is hard to know some of them from ourselves in their slouching and nasal speech. As for the Canadian French, who abound in the valley of the Connecticut, and in all the factory towns, I saw none of them in Lexington, and there are no Germans.

It is because of the typically New England character of Lexington village, as well as its historical note, that I ask English readers to be interested in it; and as we Americans are sometimes grieved by our cousins' imperfect recollection of the family troubles, I make haste to remind them that at Lexington the first blood was shed in

the war of American Independence. It has a powerful hold upon the American imagination for this reason ; it has therefore overloaded the gazetteer with namesakes in every part of the Union, and its celebrity is chief part of the first historical knowledge imparted to American schoolboys. But the village has such a charm for me from its actual loveliness and quaintness, that I should be sorry to bring that bloody spectre of the past into the foreground of any picture, and I shall blink it as long as I can.

It was a shrewish afternoon late in April when we arrived from Boston at the odd but very pleasant hotel where we spent our month of May. The season was very dry, and the bare landscape showed scarce a sign of spring. At that time there is usually a half-scared, experimental-looking verdure on our winter-beaten fields ; but except where a forlorn hope of grass cowered in some damp hollow, the meadows were now as brown and haggard in aspect as they are when the great snows leave them in mid-March, and they lie gaunt and wasted under a high, vast blue sky, full of an ironical glitter of sunshine. The wind was sharp, and for many weary weeks yet there would be no buds on the elms that creaked overhead along the village street.

Further north, in Maine and Canada, the spring comes with a bound after the thaw ; but the region of Boston seems to me the battle-ground of all the seasons when the spring is nominally in possession. On the 18th of May this year we had a soft, sunny morning, which clouded under an east wind ; a cold rain set in before noon, with hail ; it snowed the greater part of the afternoon, and we had an Italian sunset to the singing of the robins. This was excessive ; but usually after the first relenting days the winter returns, and whips the fields with sleet and snow, storm after storm ; and this martyrdom follows upon a succession of frosts and thaws, which began before Thanksgiving in November. Finally the east wind comes in, fretting the nerves and chilling the marrow, throughout April and May ; even when it does not blow it remains in the air, a sentiment of icebergs and freezing sea. It is worst, of course, on the shore, and delicate people who cannot live in it there are sent to Lexington, and thrive. The air is very dry and pure, and that is perhaps the reason why even the east wind is tolerable. Lexington Common, they say, is as high as the top of Bunker Hill Monument in Boston ; and the locomotive pants with difficulty up the heavy grade of the road near the village. Perhaps there is something in the grouping of the low hills—in the embrace of which the village lies on an ample plain—that gives it peculiar

shelter; it is certain that beyond the eastern range there is practically another climate. This is not saying that the winter is not long and dreary there; the snows lie deep in the hollows of those hills for months, and clog the long street on which the village houses are chiefly set.

Streets branch off from this thoroughfare to the right and left; but it is the newer houses which are built on these, and the more characteristic dwellings, as well as the old-fashioned shops, face the westward road along which Major Pitcairne's red-coats marched in the early April morning a hundred years ago to destroy the Provincial stores at Concord. Here and there before you reach the village is a large old mansion rambling with successive out-houses a hundred feet back from the road or beside it, all the buildings under one roof, and having a comfortable unity and snugness; but the dwellings in the village are small and very simple, generally of but two stories, and placed each in its separate little plot of ground. Where they pretend to the dignity of mansions, they stand

Somewhat back from the village street,

like the old-fashioned country-seat in Longfellow's poem, and have stately elms and burly maples about them; but they are mostly set close upon the road, as seems to have been everywhere the early custom in New England. They are all of wood—there are but two brick buildings in Lexington,—and here and there one is still painted saffron, with Paris-green shutters and white window casings—the colour of Longfellow's house and the other colonial houses in Cambridge. When the paint is not too freshly renewed, they have a suggestion of antiquity which is pleasing and satisfactory in so new a world as ours. There is no attempt at ornamentation in these unassuming houses at Lexington; that is left to the later carpentry which has produced on the intersecting streets various examples, in one story and a half, of the mansard architecture so popular in our wood-built suburbs. There is also at one point of the principal street a wooden 'block,' in emulation of the conventional American city block of brick or stone; but otherwise Lexington has escaped the ravages alike of 'tastiness' and of enterprise, and is as plain and sober a little town as it was fifty years ago. There are old-fashioned shops in rows, quite different from the 'block,' with wooden awnings to shelter their doorways, and with well-gnawed rails and horse-posts before them; there is an old tavern dating from the days when all

the transportation was by stage and waggon along the good hard roads ; there are several churches of a decent and wholesome ugliness ; and there are everywhere trees and grass and vines and flowers. The village is conscientiously clean ; but except in mid-summer the English reader must imagine a bareness impossible in an English hamlet. We have no evergreen vines ; the spruces and firs which we plant about our houses only emphasise the nakedness of all the other trees in winter ; in the clear, cold air the landscape is as blank and open as a good conscience. The village, when the leaves fall, will be honestly of whatever colour it is painted, and its outlines will be as destitute of 'atmosphere' as if they were in the moon. There is no soft discolouration of decay in roof or wall ; at the best you will have a weather-beaten gray.

Lexington has a High-School house of wood upon the model of a Grecian temple ; but the principal public building is the Town Hall, a shapely structure of brick, which has been put up within the last five or six years, and which unites under one roof, a hall for town meetings, elections, and all sorts of civic, social and artistic entertainments, the town offices, and the free town library. The number of books is uncommonly large and exceedingly well chosen, and the collection is the gift of a lady of the place ; the library is named after her, but it is piously dedicated in an inscription over the door to the men of Lexington who fell in the first battle with the British in 1775, and in the many fields of our late civil war. Statues of John Hancock and Sam Adams, the patriots who had fled from arrest in Boston, and were in hiding at Lexington the night before the affair of 1775, occupy niches in the rotunda from which the library opens, and confront figures of a provincial Minute-Man and of a national volunteer beside the door. Three days in the week the library is open from one till nine o'clock, and then there is a continual coming and going of the villagers on foot, and the neighbouring farmer-folks in buggies and carryalls. I noticed that these frequenters of the library, who thronged the reading-room, and kept the young lady at the desk incessantly busy recording the books they borrowed and returned, were mostly young people and mostly women. The women in fact are the miscellaneous readers in our country ; they make or leave unmade most literary reputations ; and I believe that it is usually by their advice when their work-worn fathers and husbands turn from their newspapers to the doubtful pleasure of a book. This is the case alike in city and country as regards lighter literature ; and in small towns these devourers of novels

and travels and magazines read so close to the bone, that sometimes being brought personally to book for my intentions in this or that passage, I have preferred to adopt their own interpretations; and when this copy of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE is laid upon the table of the town library at Lexington, I am aware that I shall not be safe from my readers in any tortuous subtlety of phrase, but that they will search me out to the finest meaning of my commas, and the last insinuation of my semicolons. But I have a good conscience and I am not afraid.

Some friends, who compassionated the extremity of an author with an unfinished novel on his hands in the penetrating disquiet of a country hotel, lent me the keys to the Town Hall, and I had the library to myself on the days when it was not open to the public, and wrote there every morning amid the books, and the memorials of Lexington's great day, and every sort of colonial bric-a-brac. On one side of the door was the gun carried by a Provincial (whose name I read whenever I lifted my eyes from my work, and now marvel that I should have forgotten) during the fight, and which being 'brought back from Concord busted,' was thrifitly sawed off just short of the fracture and afterwards used by his descendants; on the other side was a musket taken from the body of a British soldier who fell in the retreat; the sign of the old Monroe Tavern, where Earl Percy made his head-quarters when he came out to support Major Pitcairne's men, swung from the ceiling near these trophies; in glass cases on my right were collections of smaller relics, including shot from Percy's cannon, the tongue of the bell that called the villagers from their slumbers the night before the attack; the pistols, richly chased and mounted, from which Pitcairne fired the first bullet in the war that made us two peoples; the hanger worn by the sexton when he went to light the signal lantern for Paul Revere in the belfry of the Old North Church in Boston, and sent him galloping out on his midnight ride through the sleeping land with the news that the King's troops had begun their march on Concord; the broadside issued in the British interest giving an account of the day's fight; with divers shoe-buckles, rings, knives, platters, and profiles cut out of black paper, belonging to the colonial period. No motive of patriotism shall induce me to represent these collections as very rich, or in themselves very interesting, and I am aware that I cannot give them great adventitious importance by grouping them with the rude writing-desk of one of the old Puritan ministers of Lexington, or the foot-stove which one of his congregation probably carried to

meeting, and warmed his poor feet with while he thawed his imagination at the penal fires painted as the last end of sinners in the sermon ; the sincere home-made lantern of a later date, and the spinning-wheel of an uncertain epoch do not commend themselves to me as much more hopeful material for an effective picture. But all the more pathetic from their paucity did I find these few and simple records of the hard, laborious past of the little town, which flowered after a century's toil and privation into an hour of supreme heroism. For whatever may be the several minds of my readers and myself concerning their right, there can be no question between us that it was sublime for forty unwarlike farmers to stand up and take the fire of six hundred disciplined troops in defence of what they believed their right : it was English to do that, it was American, and these plain martyr-folk were both. I own that I sympathised with the piety that has treasured every relic connected, however remotely, with that time ; and that I took an increasing pleasure in showing off the trophies to such comers as tried the library door when nobody had any right there but myself. I was quite master to let them in or not, but I always opened, and waited for them to overcome their polite reluctance to disturb me at my writing. Their questions succeeded upon a proper interval of fidgetting and whispering, and then I confirmed orally all the written statements of the placards on the objects, and found my account in listening to the laudable endeavours of my visitors to connect their family history somehow with them. They were people of all ages and conditions ; but they all had these facts by heart, and were proud of them ; though with a pride unqualified by any foolish rancour. Most of all they were interested in the portrait of a young and handsome British officer in the uniform of the last century, whose sensitive face looks down from the library wall upon the records of the fight ; and when I said that this was a portrait of Earl Percy, who commanded the British artillery, and explained (as I am afraid I have not the right to explain fully here) how it came to be given to a gentleman of Lexington by the present Duke of Northumberland, I elicited nothing but praises of the Earl's good looks or expressions of satisfaction that his portrait should be there. No one apparently regarded him as out of sympathy with themselves, and I believe indeed that this generous foe acted only as a soldier on that day, and thought the measures used against the *Provincials* neither wise nor just. One small boy dwelt upon the portrait with delays that passed even the patriotic patience of the *cicerone*, and left it at last with a sigh of gratified

wonder. ‘And *he* was a Britisher!’ I give his language because, contrary to the experience of English observers among us, I never heard any other American say Britisher; and this small boy was unmistakably of Irish parentage.

The hotel in which we stayed had a characteristically American history, though it could not relate itself in any way to the revolutionary fame of Lexington, as I fancied most buildings in Lexington would have liked to do. It was the house put up by the commonwealth of Massachusetts for the use of its officers and agents at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, in Philadelphia; when the exhibition ended, the house was sold to a citizen of Lexington, who took it down piecemeal, and brought it round by ship to Boston, whence it was forwarded by rail to Lexington, and reconstructed there. This was a simpler and easier process than first appears; for the edifice was what we call a shell; it was not plastered, and the several portions being marked and numbered were easily put together again. I believe that as a speculation the removal and re-building did not pay; but when the house was rendered winter-proof, and heated with steam, it became at once the most picturesque and delightful country hotel. Outwardly it abounded in porches, in broken roofs and gables, and inwardly it was huge and rambling, with unexpected staircases and passages, and chambers of all manner of shapes and sizes, lit with transoms of coloured glass; but its most charming feature was the vast hall, running the whole length of the building and occupying the greater part of the ground floor. You entered this from the street, and wandered about in it at will till someone in authority accidentally discovered you there, and having directed you to the hotel register lying open on the piano, assigned you a room; so vague and slight in everything was the conformity to ordinary hotel usage in that pleasant house. It was like arriving at some enchanted castle; or, if it were not, so much the worse for the enchanted castle. Enchanted castles, or even those of another sort, had not a railroad, as our hotel had, at their postern gate,—a railroad that was on domestic and almost affectionate terms with us all. When the trains came scuffling and wheezing up the incline from Boston, the sound was as if the friendly locomotive were mounting the back stairs, and might be expected to walk in without ceremony, and sit down at the fire like any other boarder. We could see the trains backing and filling at the station as we sat at breakfast, and such of us as were going to town could time ourselves to the last half-minute, and count upon some sympathetic delay when we were late. Satur-

day evening, the trains all drew in with the air of having done an honest week's work, and the engines having run their empty cars up the siding, found their way to the locomotive house at their leisure, as if they were going to wash up there for Sunday, while a Sabbath peace settled with the nightfall upon the village.

I dare say I shall not be able, in this much-served England, to make it plain that our Lexington hotel was charming almost in proportion to the wide freedom granted every comer of taking care of himself; yet it was largely on account of this rather slip-shod ease that it was so pleasant. In the end one was very comfortable: the beds were good, the rooms were clean, the table was plentiful; you had what you wanted if you would take the trouble to get it, and much more than half the time it was got for you. Moreover you were breveted partner in the enterprise with a hearty good-will that could not have been bought for money, and with so much amiability, and so much real regard for your welfare, that you must have been a very extraordinary American indeed if you did not willingly accept the situation as you found it. A fire was burning all the month of May in the prodigious fireplace midway of the hall at our hotel; and if neither host nor servitor came after a reasonable time to receive the stranger, some hospitable boarder rose from the circle about the hearth, and welcomed him to one of the great Shaker rocking-chairs before the fire, while he went in search of the housekeeper or ostler. The fireplace would take in a back-log big enough to smoulder and inwardly burn for days, and it had a stomach for the largest stumps from the neighbouring fields, which it devoured together with all blocks and fragments too tough for the axe and wedge. Sometimes, as the landlord remarked, there was more wood than fire; but ordinarily a roaring blaze was not wanting, and with this, and the elk's head and antlers on the chimney-piece, the armour (brought home by one of the boarders from some joust with a bric-a-brac dealer abroad) on the opposite wall, and all the rude gothic of the architecture, which showed the beams and rafters as in a Venetian palace, we had very little difficulty in feeling baronial. It was probably a mistaken emotion; and I am not prepared to defend its genuineness against all comers. The ladies used to bring out their sewing or knitting, and chat round the fire; the men had their newspapers and cigars; as the evening wore on there was whist or euchre at the tables; sometimes people from the outside world dropped in; and if you went down late (as hours go with us in the country) you were likely to find the landlord and his brother smoking before the fire and

telling stories of Lexington as they remembered it when boys. They were born on that spot, their family had owned the land for two hundred years, and they loved their native place with a tenderness very uncommon among Americans. I remember from those drowsy hours many stories, as of the frenzy of a family cat amidst the pyrotechnic rejoicings of a Fourth of July, and the unseemly behaviour of a Lexington man's horse, who brought his owner to shame before a Boston audience by backing down stairs into a huckster's cellar in Dock Square ; but I am withheld from repeating them here by that English scrupulosity regarding the facts of private life which I am naturally anxious to emulate in writing for an English magazine. I do not know whether I am bound by the same extreme of civilisation not to speak of the old lantern which the landlord sometimes showed to guests of a very exacting patriotism as the very lantern which Paul Revere carried on his midnight ride from Boston to Concord : they found nothing odd in the suggestion that he should have carried a lantern, and no hesitation in receiving the relic as historical.

The hall was the boarders' drawing-room when they were alone ; and it was only when a sleighing party drove out from Boston in the winter, or a bicycling party arrived in the spring, that they reluctantly abandoned it to the dancing, and to the anguish of the piano which must ensue with or without the dancing. Here by day as well as by night there was easy loitering and talking amongst us, as if we were all guests in the house—as in fact we practically were ; and here on one of those white, white Sunday mornings, when the humid warmth bursts from the suddenly open portals of the South, and under a sky all sun, every bud breaks into blossom with a bee in its heart, and the whole air quavers and tinkles with the notes of blue-birds and orioles, our languor was thrilled with the horror of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke in Dublin. The crime was then but a few hours old, and it seemed to stain that exquisite Sabbath purity with blood. I think that throughout America we all felt it personally as we did Garfield's death, and that whether we hoped or whether we doubted for Ireland, we were alike dismayed at the cruel stupidity of the deed. The feeling of the hour comes back to me again in vivid association with the sensuous memory of that peculiarly American weather, of which I should perhaps try in vain to give a definite impression. It comes after long days of chilly drought, when the dust flies in the bitter east ; overnight the wind changes, a warm rain falls, which dries

in the first hours of the sun climbing a lofty sky, absolutely without cloud, of more than Italian blueness and of such continental vastness as roofed the first home of our race on Asiatic plains. In such a day there is compensation for all that has gone before ; the grass is thickly and brightly green ; the cherry-trees and pear-trees whiten the world ; the air is sweet with delicate scents, it palpitates with song. To-morrow may be like yesterday, but to-day is heavenly perfect.

We were still the same company in our hotel, when one day our evening paper brought us, fully reprinted, Mr. Matthew Arnold's recent 'Word about America.' It was a not wholly flattering word, but I do not think it could have been more amiably received if it had been so. The good-will of the writer was so evident that we all said it would not do to be vexed that he seemed not very well informed ; the Americans are in fact so used to having their ribs walked over by foreigners in the heaviest boots of travel, that this slippared and rhythmic pace was like a sort of Hawaiian *lomi-lomi* to our toughened sensibilities ; it tickled, it lulled us, it was almost a caress. The editor of our paper had warned us not to reject what truth there was in Mr. Arnold's 'Word,' and we set ourselves dutifully to seek it. We could not quite maintain with our compatriot, whose declaration seemed to have evoked the Word, that there was in every little American town a circle of cultivated people ; at the most we could assert that there was a circle of people who *wished* they were cultivated, and cordially and modestly and intelligently appreciated cultivation ; but at the bottom of our hearts we were aware of not being Murdstones, or even in an ill sense Methodists. This conception of us appeared to us lamentably mistaken ; we could not so readily have proved that we were not in a low condition from the national tendency to irreverent humour ; we have certainly a bad habit of laughing at serious things, even our critics ; but at the same time we could not see how we could be so generally wanting in sweetness and light, and yet be so often Mr. Arnold's readers and admirers. Given English middle-class Puritanism, we ought logically to have been what he imagines us ; the camel could not complain that it had not been scientifically evolved from the philosopher's consciousness ; and yet it felt itself, in its dumb helplessness, to be quite a different sort of beast. I suppose this must be always somewhat the case ; and heaven knows how the ancient Greeks and Hebrews like Mr.

Arnold's notions of them. I have myself attempted to say things of the English which have not been found just by the few English people who read them, and in fact I suppose it would be better to let each nation aggrieve its own. I shall not, therefore, presume to say that Mr. Arnold is right about the English middle class ; but if we are like what he conceives of them, I should say yes, we are perhaps the English middle class, but with the lid off. This appears to me an advantage.

At any rate this was the sum of the talk over Mr. Arnold's paper among the boarders of the Massachusetts House in Lexington. It was a purely fortuitous assemblage of people, such as one is apt to encounter at summer hotels in New England. They were of various complexions as regarded creeds and callings ; but neither their creeds nor callings appeared to characterise them ; they kept their individualities free and apart from the accidents of business and belief, in a way that I own I should be somewhat at a loss to explain. There were Unitarians, Episcopalians, Swedenborgians, Orthodox Congregationalists, and, for all I know, Baptists among them, but I think no Methodists ; and of that numerous and respectable sect there happens to be no congregation in Lexington. There is a Unitarian church, which was formerly the prevailing faith ; the Orthodox church is earnest and growing ; there is a large Irish Catholic church ; but the greatest advance has been made by the Baptists, under the ministrations of a lay-preacher, formerly a colonel in the Union army, who has lately reconstituted that body out of very perishing fragments, and made it strong and flourishing. I heard it said that he had done this by rendering the church 'attractive to young people.' There is very little religious excitement of any sort in New England, now ; the church in small places becomes more and more a social affair ; and perhaps it was chiefly in the social way that the Baptist body was rehabilitated in Lexington.

It was our good fortune to be there on Decoration Day, the anniversary when all over the country the Americans of both sections decorate with flags and flowers the graves of those who fell in the Civil War, and the soldiers who have since died. In the cities the day is celebrated with civic pomp, with parades of militia and steam fire-engines ; but in the villages its observance is an act of religion, of domestic piety ; and it is touching, after the day is past, to see the garlands withering in the lonely country graveyards, and the little flags feebly fluttering about the graves till the weather quite wears them away. Every year the graves

increase in number and the soldiers are fewer and fewer who come to lay the flowers on them; and it is in the country that this waste of life is most sorrowfully noticeable. At Lexington, two new graves had been added to those of the year before, and of the young men who went to the war from the town only a score of middle-aging veterans remained. These facts were touched upon in the address with which the ceremonies of the day were closed in the Town Hall at night, and the sad and glorious associations of the past were invoked by a speaker who had himself been part of those great events. He was now the Unitarian minister of the village, and he had been preceded in prayer by the Orthodox Congregational minister; the gentleman, by the way, through whom the Duke of Northumberland presented Lord Percy's portrait to the town. There was excellent singing by a choir of men's voices; and for the rest there was very earnest attention on the part of the people who filled the hall to overflowing. The audience was not of unmixed Yankee race; the Irish quarter of Lexington was duly represented, but all were one in a sense of the gravity of the occasion, and the whole assembly was subdued, old and young alike, to a Puritanic seriousness of demeanour. It is sometimes a little amusing to find how aptly the Irish settled in the rural communities of New England take on the prevailing type of manners; they are perhaps, with the Celtic conception of democracy, that 'one man is as good as another and a dale better too,' a little more American in some things than the natives themselves; but it appears to be their ambition to conform as closely as possible to our social ideal. The imitation is by no means superficial; they are industrious and thrifty, and except that they unfailingly vote for whatever is illiberal and retrograde in politics, they are not bad citizens in such communities, whatever they are in the larger towns. I was not near enough to the veterans occupying the front benches to see how many were of Irish birth; but it is known how well they served in the army; and I dare say no one present took greater satisfaction in the expressions relating the second war for freedom to the part Lexington had borne in the struggle against England. The Revolution was remembered in the special decoration of the statues of Adams and Hancock and the Minute-Man with wreaths of hemlock and pine, which, in a season that denied the usual profusion of flowers, did duty for them throughout the day.

One night we had a concert in the Town Hall, which was so curiously American as regards the artists that I wish I could give

a thoroughly intelligible idea of the affair. They were all of one family—father, mother, and nine children between nineteen and five years old—two children younger still being left at home out of regard to their tender age. They were from utmost Oregon, and they had gone about the whole country, singing and playing, apparently ever since any of the children could walk. They had visited the White House in Washington, and had been very acceptable everywhere to Sunday schools and scrupulous pleasure-seekers because of the edifying character of their entertainments, which were certainly exemplary from the moral side. I cannot say much as to the artistic quality of their programme ; it commanded itself by dealing with those themes of domestic and obituary interest in which our balladry delights ; it was varied with a very little very modest dancing, and sketches of infantine drama ; but they were nevertheless gifted people, and while they conformed to the popular taste in their performances, they were all working hard at the science of their profession under a German master. They stopped at our hotel, and we had the advantage of seeing them in private as well as in public, and of witnessing the triumph of the family among them over the temptations of their difficult and hazardous experiment ; the young people were quiet and well-mannered ; the little ones far less spoiled than might have been expected of babes encored several times every night ; and there was a spirit of mutual affection and of discipline manifest in them which I should like to claim as characteristic of the American family under less arduous conditions. The father talked freely of his theories for maintaining a home-life in his nomadic tribe ; and the author sojourning in the hotel did not think the less of his methods when he said he had read the author's books, and introduced his children as versed in them. This author had long had his ideas of what those novels, those travels, those unsaleable poems, those intheatricable dramas, rightly understood, might do for mankind, and here

I was very glad that the Lexington people gave the singing and playing family a good house, and I fancy that they do not refuse any fit occasions for amusing themselves. The young men seem not to go away from home so generally as they do from most country towns in New England ; it is perhaps because their pleasant village is so near the city ; at any rate they remain at home even after being graduated at Harvard. They have sleigh rides, and dances at the Town Hall during the winter ; I was told that the Lexington 'germans' are not despised by the under-

graduates of Cambridge ; and ' Oh, I tell you,' I heard it said by one of themselves, ' the Lexington girls have a good time ! ' In the summer there are of course picnics, and of late riding has come greatly into vogue in the country all about Boston. The rigours of our winters and summers are against that pleasure, and hitherto it was almost unknown ; but now, thanks largely to the importation of Texan riding-horses, it is especially prevalent at Lexington. These horses, which are small, are very strong and tough, and they look like little thoroughbreds. Like all Southern horses, they are broken to walk very rapidly, and they have in perfection that gait which in the south-west is called a *lope*. When they are first brought north they sell for prices ranging from \$40 to \$100, or eight to twenty pounds. Their popularity has revived the sport, almost obsolete in the north, of horse-racing at Lexington, where I once saw a race between gentlemen riders, which had apparently called out the greater part of the population. We drove through miles of the small pine forest, which growing up all over New England on the exhausted lands, gives such an impression of wildness ; and came at last to a space in the woods where a track had been newly laid out in the white birch scrub, or newly recovered from it, and where we found everything prepared for the sport in due form. The riders gave us all the gaiety of jockey dress, as well as the race, for our money ; the ground was thronged with carriages and buggies ; there was a tally-ho coach which had been driven out from Boston, and I went about bewildered at this transformation of my poor New England, and fearfully hoping there was nothing wicked in so much apparent enjoyment with no apparent useful purpose, till I heard myself indicated in a whisper as ' one of the horse-men.' Then I desperately abandoned myself to the common dissipation, for it was idle to be better than one seemed.

These Texan horses, which are not quite the mustangs of the prairies, are ridden with high-pommeled, wooden-stirruped Mexican saddles ; and when a party of young people dashed by the hotel in the twilight, it was with a picturesqueness which the pig-skin of Anglo-Saxon civilisation fails to impart to a man. But let me not give the impression of mere pleasure-taking on the part of these cavaliers ; they were students at law or medicine, or they were young men of business recreating themselves after the close application of a day in town ; by-and-by, when they were married, they would content themselves with their cigars and their newspapers, and leave others to ride with pretty girls in the dusk of

the evening, or chase the flying tennis-ball on the whitewashed lawn. Except perhaps at Newport, or the New York clubs, one sees few men of leisure with us, and the example of these few is not one to make the Republic pine for that leisure class which the Old World finds indispensable to its government and refinement. Women of leisure we certainly have ; they distinguish and adorn us everywhere, advancing (as we understand) the standard of dress abroad, and absorbing and diffusing ideas of taste and culture at home. Wherever the piano-forte penetrates, lovely woman lifts her fingers from the needle, the broom-handle, and the washboard, and places them on its keys, never again to be restored to those odious implements ; she finds that she has a mind, and she makes her husband or her father pay for it ; she begins to have aims, to draw, to model, to decorate, to lecture, and to render herself self-supporting by every expensive device. This alone is enough to keep the men of her family busy, and to prevent the commonwealth from lapsing into decay ; the civic virtues fall naturally to the care of the trained patriots who are 'inside politics'

I perceive too late that by an infrangible chain of reasoning I have been proving that we too are governed and refined by a leisure class, and that there is only the trifling difference of sex between the American and the European aristocracies. At the same time I have got rather far away from Lexington, where life seemed to be still very unambitious and old-fashioned. I wish I could say that it was cheap ; but this is not the case in the suburbs of any of our Atlantic cities. House rent is certainly less, but the railroad fares and the express-man's charges go far to equalise that with the city rate ; about Boston the suburban taxes are sometimes greater than the city taxes ; provisions and service are a little costlier, and unless one conforms quite strictly to the local standard of simplicity, one is apt to live quite as expensively as in town. It would cost as much to live with the same ease in Lexington as in Boston ; that is to say, a third more than in London. But one is not obliged to live with 'ease' there, and he may live in comfort for a reasonable sum. It struck me that the place had studied convenience scientifically, and that in a modest way it was entirely sufficient to itself, with its good schools, its admirable library, its well-kept streets and roads ; its sociable little line of railroad connecting it with the city by ten or twelve trains a day ; its well-stocked provision stores, and its variety of other shops. There cannot be many

more than a thousand people in the village, including the Irish hamlet by the railroad side; but it is lighted with gas, and they are talking of waterworks. I dare say they will soon have drainage and malaria.

The village of Lexington, however, is not one of those examples of rapid growth with which we like to astonish the world. I doubt if it can be more than twice as populous as when a hundred years ago it became the scene of the brief conflict which has made it memorable. Our hotel fronted the road along which the King's troops had marched in the twilight of the morning of April 19, 1775, and on which they retreated in the afternoon. The common where the encounter with the *Provincials* took place was but a minute's walk away, and with the relics of the library close at hand, we dwelt, as it were, in the midst of heroic memories. One pleasant forenoon, when the May had remitted its worst rigours, and nature was making the most, with birds and sunshine, of a respite from the east wind, we strolled up to the pretty green, and leaning upon the rail that encloses it, listened to the story of the fight from one who had all but been present in his careful and enthusiastic studies of its details.

The green is an irregular triangle fronted by the village churches and dwellings, and the historic fact is commemorated by a rude monument erected at the close of the last century, with an inscription by the minister of the village: a good man who seemed to have learned his rhetoric from the French Republic, then distributing equality and fraternity to the reluctant peoples of Europe at the point of the bayonet. The stone is 'sacred to liberty, independence, and the rights of man;' it rehearses in swelling terms the wrongs endured from British tyranny by the colonists, and their resort to arms. 'The contest was long, bloody and affecting: righteous Heaven approved the solemn appeal,' and the sovereignty of the States was the final consequence. The great-grandchildren of those who fell there look from their windows upon the consecrated spot; not far up a street to the northward the house yet stands in which Adams and Hancock were hiding, with a price set on their heads by the British commandant in Boston, while Major Pitcairne's troops were marching up the Concord road; and three of the houses that witnessed the bloodshed on the green seem to be still strong and sound, and good for another hundred years. They are all interesting as specimens of the early village architecture of New England, and one is especially quaint and picturesque, with a

pretty, old-fashioned garden beside it, where the flowers defied the May in a sort of embattled bloom. This was the Buckner Tavern at the time of the fight, and it was even then an old house — of the seventeenth century, as the beams in the parlour ceiling still show. It afforded a rendezvous for the provincials when the alarm of the British approach was first sounded by Paul Revere, and there most of the men lingered and waited subject to their captain's orders, after he had begun to doubt the truth of the rumour. The interval must have been trying to those unwarlike men, but they all answered the drum when a messenger galloped up with the news that the King's troops were right upon them. Some of them had gone to bed again in their homes beside the green, and they left their wives and children sleeping almost within sound of a whisper from the spot where they loosely formed on the grass before their doors. They were very simple and quiet folks, with no long perspective of national glory to embolden and sustain them in the resistance they were about to offer their King: a name at which we do not trouble ourselves to laugh now, but which was then to be feared next to God's. Independence was scarcely dreamt of; all that the villagers were clear of was their right as Englishmen, and they stood there upon that, with everything else around them in a dark far thicker than the morning gloom out of which the red-coats flashed at the other corner of the green. Major Pitcairne called a halt at some thirty rods, and riding forward swore at the damned rebels, and bade them disperse. They stood firm, and he ordered his men to fire; the soldiers hesitated; but when he drew his pistols and emptied them at the provincials, they discharged a volley, and eight of our people fell. They were not a tithe of the enemy in number, and it is doubtful if they returned the fire; their captain called a retreat, and those who were unhurt made their escape, to join later in the long running fight through which the provincials all day harassed the flight of the British from Concord back to Boston. Major Pitcairne had dispersed a riot, and had shed the first blood in a seven years' war. The dead men lay on the grass where their children had played a few hours before; one, shot through the breast, dragged himself a little space to his own threshold and died there in the arms of his wife.

Many stories are told of the peaceful inexperience of these people who had defied a mighty empire. A few of them had been in what we call the Old French War, and had served under Wolfe at the taking of Quebec; but it was so little understood generally

that war meant fighting, that some boys came to the common that morning as to a sort of muster, and only retired when the bullets whistled over their heads. After the encounter at Concord, where an hour or two later—

The embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world,

the popular education in the art of war proceeded rapidly ; though even then one of our men who was unsuspicuously firing from behind a stone wall at the British column in the road, had the surprise and mortification to be himself shot in the back by a flanking party. Before noon the retreat from Concord had become a rout, that was not arrested till Earl Percy arrived at Lexington with twelve hundred men and two pieces of cannon. The whole country side was up ; the Minute-Men from Acton, Concord, Menotomy, Lexington, and Cambridge were joined by those of Woburn, Billerica, and even some of the seaboard towns, in pursuing the King's troops. The season was so unusually advanced that the cherry trees were in bloom ; the day was one of that sudden and sickening heat that sometimes occurs in our spring ; and when the troops met Percy's supporting column at the Monroe Tavern, many of them fell down in the dust, 'with their tongues lolling out like dogs.' They had fought a running fight for ten miles, and they had marched in all nearly thirty since they left Boston the night before. Percy's cannon scared away the riflemen who hung upon their rear, and his men, scattering over the country, fired the farm-houses that might be supposed to afford shelter to the Minute-Men. Some of the houses were beyond gunshot, and the sick and old who were here and there bayoneted in them would perhaps now have been spared. The word had gone about that the Americans were scalping the English dead, and something had to be done in retaliation ; no soldiers were found scalped, but a good many farmhouses were burned ; for when Percy began to retire, the shooting from the walls and the woods along the road began again, and continued throughout the retreat. At different points on the route stones have been set up to commemorate the acts of reprisal committed by the soldiers : here stood a house burned by the British ; in another house three Americans were massacred ; in another twelve, and so forth. One of these monuments, in Arlington (then Menotomy), celebrates the valour and final perseverance of one of the patriots in terms that used to amuse me in spite of the gravity of the facts. 'On this spot, Samuel Whittemore, aged 81, killed three

British soldiers. He was shot, beaten, bayoneted, and left for dead, but recovered, and lived to be 98 years old.' My readers may differ with me as to the political principles of this hoary man, but there can be but one opinion concerning his resolution and physical toughness.

We have counted it all joy in our annals that we were able to embitter defeat to the British in the pursuit from Concord to Boston, and have of course made the most of their reprisals. But perhaps these did not appear to them such enormities. To be fired on from every covert by the roadside, and helplessly slaughtered by a people they despised, was a thing that must have had its exacerbations; and they responded in the way that might have been expected. 'War is cruel, madam,' General Sherman explained to the lady who came out from Atlanta to reproach him for bombarding a town where so many non-combatants must suffer; and our race, whether English or American, has never 'made war with water of roses.' The British had succeeded in the object of their expedition; they had destroyed the Provincial stores at Concord; but they lost that day more men than it cost them to capture Quebec. The day is only a chapter of history now. We are tender and proud of it, because it is our own, and because it vindicated us, and proved us after the fashion of war in the right. But if there have been griefs between the two countries that no dilution of 'the language of Shakespeare and Milton' can wash out the memory of, there is scarcely a pang in them any more. Meanwhile we are still very far apart, and after all that cables and steamships can do, there are three thousand miles of sea, and immeasurable gulfs of Democracy between us. With a few exceptions on either side, we heartily dislike and distrust each other's civic and social ideas. England Americanises in some respects, in some respects America Anglicises; but the most of that amounts to very little, I suspect; and for our part, whatever outcry we make over our own follies and sins and errors, we do not believe that it is less democracy, but more, that is to help us. Mere contiguity might do something to reconcile the ideals of the two countries, but it could not do everything. The four millions of Canada are not affected by the proximity of our fifty millions; they cling all the more closely to the English ideal, or what they imagine it to be, and shudder at the spectre of annexation, which exists only in their own nervous abhorrence.

At the same time, there is apt to be so much kindness between us personally when we meet on any common ground, that it is diffi-

cult to realise the national alienation, and impossible to account for it. We seem so very much alike—I necessarily speak only for the American half of the impression—that we feel like asserting an indisputable brotherhood. Upon reflection we have our reserves, our doubts, our fears ; but for the time the illusion is delightfully perfect. It occurs with Americans, sometimes not only upon acquaintance or speech with Englishmen, but at the mere sight of their faces, which have a kindred look, whatever their calling or degree ; and I think we are never less wrapped in the national flag than when we encounter English soldiers. The other day I was walking through one of the Parks when I came upon some sort of little barrack, where two or three privates, being temporarily debarred from flirtation with the nursery maids by the duty they were on, presented themselves purely and simply as my traditional enemies. But so far from wishing to offer them battle, I could only think of that whimsical and remorseful passage of Hawthorne's '*Septimus Felton*,' in which he describes Pitcairne's men as they marched into Concord after the affair at Lexington, dusty, wearied and footsore, but 'needing only a half-hour's rest, a good breakfast, and a pot of beer apiece, to make them ready to face the world. Nor did their faces look in any way rancorous, but at the most only heavy, cloddish, good-natured, and humane. "Oh heavens, Mr. Felton !" whispered Rose ; "why should we shoot these men, or they us ? They look kind, if homely." "It is the strangest thing in the world that we should think of killing them," said *Septimus*.'

Indeed it was monstrous. I realised then as never before the tremendous moral disadvantage a democracy is at in any war with a royal or oligarchic power; for whereas a portion of the Republican idea is slain in every American who perishes on the field, the poor fellows who fall on the other side personally express nothing, while the real enemy remains safe at home. It was no longer a question of shooting at the King and his ministers from behind stone walls, as it had been hitherto, but of picking off such amiable and friendly-looking folk as those I saw. Something in my heart—no doubt the brother plebeian—stirred in their presence with a novel pain ; and if I could have hoped to make these honest men in anywise cognisant of April 19, 1775, I might have wished to excuse it to them.

W. D. HOWELLS.

'Departed.'

W. M. A.—died April 20, 1882.

I.

DEPARTED—never more to go or come ;
Leaving men's moans and gibes, and sighs and grins,
Their unbless'd blessings, unrepented sins ;—
Departed from among us and gone home !
Thou look'st no more with us on yon blue dome ;
Thy laugh no more rings out like these glad rills
That break the purple silence of the hills,
Decking the hard, rough rocks with dazzling foam ;
As thou so many years didst deck our lives
With thy bright patience, and the strength which strives
To know God's will and do it, however sore.
Sweet soul ! that to the pure heart of a boy
Joined a man's power, to suffer and enjoy.
Six feet in earth we laid thee—and all's o'er !

II.

Not o'er ! Forbid it, all ye infinite deeps
Of sky and sea, hills set in amber air :
Why should God make this outward world so fair,
If souls who love Him, He nor loves nor keeps,
But lets slip from Him into deathly sleeps
Of cold corruption ? And thee most of all,
Who heard, long ere *we* heard it ! the last call,
'Son, come up higher,' and through such silent steeps
Of pain toiled upwards to Him. Their desire
Those sure attain who righteously aspire :
Therefore adieu a little while—*à Dieu !*
To God we give thee, and to God we tend.
No tears ! *thou* wept'st not ; but expect us, friend,
In thy far land where the heavens and earth are new.

THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HALIFAX GENTLEMAN.'

ARRAN,
August 1882.

Our Origin as a Species.

THREE seems to be a manifest desire in some quarters to anticipate the looked-for and, by some, hoped-for, proofs of our descent—or rather ascent—from the Ape.

In the September issue of the 'Fortnightly Review' a writer cites, in this relation, 'the Neanderthal skull, which possesses large bosses on the forehead, strikingly suggestive of those which give the gorilla its peculiarly fierce appearance ;' and, he proceeds: 'No other human skull presents so utterly bestial a type as the Neanderthal fragment. If one cuts a female gorilla-skull in the same fashion the resemblance is truly astonishing, and we may say that the only human feature in the skull is its size.'¹

In testing the question as between Linnæus and Cuvier of the zoological value of the differences between lowest man and highest ape, a naturalist would not limit his comparison of a portion of the human skull with the corresponding one of a female ape, but would extend it to the young or immature gorilla, and also to the adult male: he would then find the generic and specific characters summed up, so far, at least, as a portion or 'fragment' of the skull might show them. What is posed as the 'Neanderthal skull' is the roof of the brain-case, or 'calvarium' of the anatominist, including the pent-house overhanging the eye-holes or 'orbits.' There is no other part of the fragment which can be supposed to be meant by the 'large bosses' of the above quotation. And, on this assumption, I have to state that the superorbital ridge in the calvarium in question is but little more prominent than in certain human skulls of both higher and lower races, and of both the existing and cave-dwelling periods. It is a variable cranial character by no means indicative of race, but rather of sex.

Limiting the comparison to that on which the writer quoted bases his conclusions—apparently the superficial extent of the roof-plate—its greater extent as compared with that of a gorilla equalling, probably, in weight the entire frame of the individual

¹ Grant Allen, *On Primitive Man*, p. 314.

from the Neanderthal cave, is strongly significant of the superiority of size of brain in the cave-dweller. The inner surface moreover indicates the more complex character of the soft organ on which it was moulded: the precious 'grey substance' being multiplied by certain convolutions which are absent in the apes. But there is another surface which the unbiassed zoologist finds it requisite to compare. In the human 'calvarium' in question, the mid-line traced backward from the super-orbital ridge runs along a smooth tract. In the gorilla a ridge is raised from along the major part of that tract to increase the surface giving attachment to the biting muscles. Such ridge in this position varies only in height in the female and the male adult ape, as the specimens in the British Museum demonstrate. In the Neanderthal individual, as in the rest of mankind, the corresponding muscles do not extend their origins to the upper surface of the cranium, but stop short at the sides forming the inner wall or boundary of what are called the 'temples,' defined by Johnson as the 'upper part of the sides of the head,' whence our 'biting muscles' are called 'temporal,' as the side-bones of the skull to which they are attached are also the 'temporal bones.' In the superficial comparison to which Mr. Grant Allen has restricted himself, in bearing testimony on a question which perhaps affects our fellow-creatures, in the right sense of the term, more warmly than any other in human and comparative anatomy, the obvious difference just pointed out ought not to have been passed over. It was the more incumbent on one pronouncing on the paramount problem, because the 'sagittal ridge in the gorilla,' as in the orang, relates to and signifies the dental character which differentiates all *Quadrupana* from all *Bimana* that have ever come under the ken of the biologist. And this ridge much more 'strikingly suggests' the fierceness of the powerful brute-ape than the part referred to as 'large bosses.' Frontal prominences, more truly so termed, are even better developed in peaceful, timid, graminivorous quadrupeds than in the skulls of man or of ape. But before noticing the evidence which the teeth bear on the physical relations of man to brute, I would premise that the comparison must not be limited to a part or 'fragment' of the bony frame, but to its totality, as relating to the modes and faculties of locomotion.

Beginning with the skull—and, indeed, for present aim, limiting myself thereto—I have found that a vertical longitudinal section brings to light in greatest number and of truest value the

differential characters between lowest *Homo* and highest *Simia*. Those truly and indifferently interested in the question may not think it unworthy their time—if it has not already been so bestowed—to give attention to the detailed discussions and illustrations of the characters in question in the second and third volumes of the 'Transactions of the Zoological Society.'¹ The concluding Memoir, relating more especially to points of approximation in cranial and dental structure of the highest *Quadrumane* to the lowest *Bimane*, has been separately published.

I selected from the large and instructive series of human skulls of various races in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons that which was the lowest, and might be called most bestial, in its cranial and dental characters. It was from an adult of that human family of which the life-characters are briefly but truly and suggestively defined in the narrative of Cook's first voyage in the 'Endeavour.'²

Not to trespass further on the patience of my readers, I may refer to the 'Memoir on the Gorilla,' 4to, 1865. Plate XII. gives a view, natural size, of the vertical and longitudinal section of an Australian skull; Plate XI. gives a similar view of the skull of the gorilla. Reduced copies of these views may be found at p. 572, figs. 395, 396, vol. ii. of my 'Anatomy of Vertebrates.'

As far as my experience has reached, there is no skull displaying the characters of a Quadrumanous species, as that series descends from the gorilla and chimpanzee to the baboon, which exhibits differences, osteal or dental, on which specific and generic distinctions are founded, so great, so marked, as are to be seen, and have been above illustrated, in the comparison of the highest ape with the lowest man.

The modification of man's upper limbs for the endless variety, nicety, and perfection of their application, in fulfilment of the behests of his correspondingly developed brain—actions summed up in the term 'manipulation'—testify as strongly to the same conclusion. The corresponding degree of modification of the human lower limbs, to which he owes his upright attitude, relieving the manual instruments from all share in station and terrestrial locomotion—combine and concur in raising the group

¹ 'Osteological Contributions to the Natural History of the Orangs (*Pithecius*) and Chimpanzees (*Troglodites niger* and *Troglodites Gorilla*).'

² Hawkesworth's 4th ed., vol. iii. 1770, pp. 86, 137, 229. The skull in question is No. 5394 of the Catalogue of the Osteology in the above Museum, 4to, vol. ii. p. 823 (1853).

so characterised above and beyond the apes, to, at least, ordinal distinction. The dental characters of mankind bear like testimony. The lowest (Melanian), like the highest (Caucasian), variety of the Bimanal order differs from the Quadrumanal one in the order of appearance, and succession to the first set of teeth, of the second or 'permanent' set. The foremost incisor and foremost molar are the earliest to appear in that series; the intermediate teeth are acquired sooner than those behind the foremost molar.³

In the gorilla and chimpanzee the rate or course of progress is reversed: the second true molar, or the one behind the first, makes its appearance before the bicuspid molars rise in front of the first; and the third or last of the molars behind the first comes into place before the canine tooth has risen. This tooth, indeed, which occupies part of the interval between the foremost incisor and foremost molar, is the last of the permanent set of teeth to be fully developed in the *Quadruman*; especially in those which, in their order, rank next to the *Bimana*. To this differential character add the breaks in the dental series necessitated for the reception of the crowns of the huge canines when the gorilla or chimpanzee shuts its mouth.

But the superior value of developmental over adult anatomical characters in such questions as the present is too well known in the actual phase of biology to need comment.

In the article on 'Primeval Man,' the author states that the Cave-men 'probably had lower foreheads, with high bosses, like the Neanderthal skull and big canine teeth like the Naulette jaw.'⁴

The human lower jaw, so defined from a Belgian cave, which I have carefully examined, gives no evidence of a canine tooth of a size indicative of one in the upper jaw, necessitating such vacancy in the lower series of teeth which the apes present. There is no such vacancy nor any evidence of a 'big canine tooth' in that cave specimen. And, with respect to cave specimens in general, the zoological characters of the race of men they represent must be founded on the rule, not on an exception, to their cranial features. Those which I obtained from the cavern at Bruniquel, and which are now exhibited in the Museum of Natural History, were disinterred under circumstances more satisfactorily determining their contemporaneity with the extinct quadrupeds those cave-men killed and devoured than in any other spelæan retreat

* *Odontography*, 4to, 1840-44, p. 454, Plates 117, 118, 119.

† *Forthnightly Review*, September, p. 321.

which I have explored. They show neither 'lower foreheads' nor 'higher bosses' than do the skulls of existing races of mankind.

Present evidence concurs in concluding that the modes of life and grades of thought of the men who have left evidences of their existence at the earliest periods, hitherto discovered and determined, were such as are now observable in 'savages,' or the human races which are commonly so called.

The industry and pains now devoted to the determination of the physical characters of such races, to their ways of living, their tools and weapons, and to the relations of their dermal, osteal, and dental modifications to those of the mammals which follow next after *Bimana* in the descensive series of mammalian orders, are exemplary.

The present phase of the quest may be far from the bourne to yield hereafter trustworthy evidence of the origin of man; but, meanwhile, exaggerations and misstatements of acquired grounds ought especially to be avoided.

R. OWEN.

A Gossip on Romance.

IN anything fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous ; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, or the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand coloured pictures to the eye. It was for this last pleasure that we read so closely, and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood. Eloquence and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles. For my part, I liked a story to begin with an old way-side inn where, 'towards the close of the year 17—,' several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls. A friend of mine preferred the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward, and a scowling fellow of Herculean proportions striding along the beach : he, to be sure, was a pirate. This was further afield than my home-keeping fancy loved to travel, and designed altogether for a larger canvas than the tales that I affected. Give me a highwayman and I was full to the brim ; a Jacobite would do, but the highwayman was my favourite dish. I can still hear that merry clatter of the hoofs along the moonlit lane ; night and the coming of day are still related in my mind with the doings of John Rann or Jerry Abershaw ; and the words 'postchaise,' the 'great North road,' 'ostler,' and 'nag' still sound in my ears like poetry. One and all, at least, and each with his particular fancy, we read story-books in childhood, not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident. That quality was not mere bloodshed or wonder. Although each of these was welcome in its place, the charm for the sake of which we read depended on something different from either. My elders used to read novels aloud ; and I can still remember four different passages which I heard, before I was ten,

with the same keen and lasting pleasure. One I discovered long afterwards to be the admirable opening of 'What will he Do with It': it was no wonder I was pleased with that. The other three still remain unidentified. One is a little vague: it was about a dark, tall house at night, and people groping on the stairs by the light that escaped from the open door of a sick-room. In another, a lover left a ball, and went walking in a cool, dewy park, whence he could watch the lighted windows and the figures of the dancers as they moved. This was the most sentimental impression I think I had yet received, for a child is somewhat deaf to the sentimental. In the last, a poet, who had been tragically wrangling with his wife, walked forth on the sea-beach on a tempestuous night and witnessed the horrors of a wreck. Different as they are, all these early favourites have a common note—they have all a touch of the romantic.

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance. The pleasure that we take in life is of two sorts—the active and the passive. Now we are conscious of a great command over our destiny; anon we are lifted up by circumstance, as by a breaking wave, and dashed we know not how into the future. Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by our surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more constant. Conduct is three parts of life, but it is not all the four. There is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply a-moral; which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms, or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant arbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships,

of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen ; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race ; and when I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder ; certain old houses demand to be haunted ; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, 'miching mallecho.' The inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river—though it is known already as the place where Keats finished his 'Endymion' and Nelson parted from his Emma—still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry is another. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine—in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guardship swinging to her anchor ; behind, the old garden with the trees. Americans seek it already for the sake of Lovel and Oldbuck, who dined there at the beginning of the 'Antiquary.' But you need not tell me—that is not all ; there is some story, unrecorded or not yet complete, which must express the meaning of that inn more fully. So it is with names and faces ; so it is with incidents that are idle and inconclusive in themselves, and yet seem like the beginning of some quaint romance, which the all-careless author leaves untold. How many of these romances have we not seen determine at their birth ; how many people have met us with a look of meaning in their eye, and sunk at once into idle acquaintances ; to how many places have we not drawn near, with express intimations—'here my destiny awaits me'—and we have but dined there and passed by ! I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place ; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark.

The man or the hour had not yet come ; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.

Now, this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. The dullest of clowns tells, or tries to tell, himself a story, as the feeblest of children uses invention in his play ; and even as the imaginative grown person, joining in the game, at once enriches it with many delightful circumstances, the great creative writer shows us the realisation and the apotheosis of the daydreams of common men. His stories may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to satisfy the nameless longings of the reader and to obey the ideal laws of the daydream. The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place ; the right kind of thing should follow ; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web ; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each other or to nature, which stamps the story home like an illustration. Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears, these are each culminating moments in the legend, and each has been printed on the mind's eye for ever. Other things we may forget ; we may forget the words, although they are beautiful ; we may forget the author's comment, although perhaps it was ingenious and true ; but these epoch-making scenes, which put the last mark of truth upon a story and fill up, at one blow, our capacity for sympathetic pleasure, we so adopt into the very bosom of our mind that neither time nor tide can efface or weaken the impression. This, then, is the plastic part of literature : to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. This is the highest and hardest thing to do in words ; the thing which, once accomplished, equally delights the schoolboy and the sage, and makes, in its own right, the quality of epics. Compared with this, all other purposes in literature, except the purely lyrical or the purely philosophic, are bastard in nature, facile of execu-

tion, and feeble in result. It is one thing to write about the inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-painters ; it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend. It is one thing to remark and to dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life, and of the human spirit ; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax or of Hamlet. The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.

English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of tea-spoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one. Reduced even to the lowest terms, a certain interest can be communicated by the art of narrative ; a sense of human kinship stirred ; and a kind of monotonous fitness, comparable to the words and air of ‘Sandy’s Mull,’ preserved among the infinitesimal occurrences recorded. Some people work, in this manner, with even a strong touch. Mr. Trollope’s inimitable clergymen naturally arise to the mind in this connection. But even Mr. Trollope does not confine himself to chronicling small beer. Mr. Crawley’s collision with the Bishop’s wife, Mr. Melnotte dallying in the deserted banquet-room, are typical incidents, epically conceived, fitly embodying a crisis. If Rawdon Crawley’s blow were not delivered, ‘Vanity Fair’ would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale ; and the discharge of energy from Rawdon’s fist is the reward and consolation of the reader. The end of ‘Esmond’ is a yet wider excursion from the author’s customary fields ; the scene at Castlewood is pure Dumas ; the great and wily English borrower has here borrowed from the great, unblushing French thief ; as usual, he has borrowed admirably well, and the breaking of the sword rounds off the best of all his books with a manly, martial note. But perhaps nothing can more strongly illustrate the necessity for marking incident than to compare the living fame of ‘Robinson Crusoe’ with the discredit of ‘Clarissa Harlowe.’ ‘Clarissa’ is a book of a far more startling import, worked out, on a great canvas, with inimitable courage and unflagging art ; it contains wit, character, passion, plot, conversations full of spirit and insight, letters sparkling with unstrained humanity ; and if the death of the heroine be somewhat frigid and artificial, the last days of the hero strike the only note of what we now call Byronism, between the Elizabethans and Byron himself. And yet a little story of a

shipwrecked sailor, with not a tenth part of the style nor a thousandth part of the wisdom, exploring none of the arcana of humanity and deprived of the perennial interest of love, goes on from edition to edition, ever young, while 'Clarissa' lies upon the shelves unread. A friend of mine, a Welsh blacksmith, was twenty-five years old, and could neither read nor write, when he heard a chapter of 'Robinson' read aloud in a farm kitchen. Up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance ; but he left that farm another man. There were daydreams, it appeared, divine daydreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat that day, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost, nor could he find another copy but one that was in English. Down he sat once more, learned English, and at length, and with entire delight, read 'Robinson.' It is like the story of a love-chase. If he had heard a letter from 'Clarissa,' would he have been fired with the same chivalrous ardour ? I wonder. Yet 'Clarissa' has every quality that can be shown in prose, one alone excepted : pictorial, or picture-making romance. While 'Robinson' depends, for the most part and with the overwhelming majority of its readers, on the charm of circumstance.

' In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest rise and fall together by a common and organic law. Situation is animated with passion, passion clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art ; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. Such are epics, and the few prose tales that have the epic weight. But as from a school of works, aping the creative, incident and romance are ruthlessly discarded, so may character and drama be omitted or subordinated to romance. There is one book, for example, more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age—I mean the 'Arabian Nights'—where you shall look in vain for moral or for intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggar-men. Adventure, on the most naked terms furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough. Dumas approaches perhaps nearest of any modern to these Arabian authors in the purely material charm of his romances. The early part of 'Monte

Christo,' down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect story-telling ; the man never breathed who shared these moving incidents without a tremor ; and yet Faria is a thing of packthread and Dantès little more than a name. The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, bloody, unnatural and dull ; but as for these early chapters, I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmixed atmosphere of romance. It is very thin and light, to be sure, as on a high mountain ; but it is brisk and clear and sunny in proportion. I saw the other day, with envy, an old and a very clever lady setting forth on a second or third voyage into ' Monte Christo.' Here are stories, which powerfully affect the reader, which can be reperused at any age, and where the characters are no more than puppets. The bony fist of the showman visibly propels them ; their springs are an open secret ; their faces are of wood, their bellies filled with bran ; and yet we thrillingly partake of their adventures. And the point may be illustrated still further. The last interview between Lucy and Richard Feverell is pure drama ; more than that, it is the strongest scene, since Shakespeare, in the English tongue. Their first meeting by the river, on the other hand, is pure romance ; it has nothing to do with character ; it might happen to any other boy and maiden, and be none the less delightful for the change. And yet I think he would be a bold man who should choose between these passages. Thus, in the same book, we may have two scenes, each capital in its order : in the one, human passion, deep calling unto deep, shall utter its genuine voice ; in the second, according circumstances, like instruments in tune, shall build up a trivial but desirable incident, such as we love to prefigure for ourselves ; and in the end, in spite of the critics, we may hesitate to give the preference to either. The one may ask more genius—I do not say it does ; but at least the other dwells as clearly in the memory.

True romantic art, again, makes a romance of all things. It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal ; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism. ' Robinson Crusoe ' is as realistic as it is romantic ; both qualities are pushed to an extreme, and neither suffers. Nor does romance depend upon the material importance of the incidents. To deal with strong and deadly elements, banditti, pirates, war, and murder, is to conjure with great names, and, in the event of failure, to double the disgrace. The arrival of Haydn and Consuelo at the Canon's villa is a very trifling incident ; yet we may read a dozen boisterous stories from beginning to end, and not receive so fresh and stirring an impression of adventure. It

was the scene of Crusoe at the wreck, if I remember rightly, that so bewitched my blacksmith. Nor is the fact surprising. Every single article the castaway recovers from the hulk is 'a joy for ever' to the man who reads of them. They are the things he ought to find, and the bare enumeration stirs the blood. I found a glimmer of the same interest the other day in a new book, 'The Sailor's Sweetheart,' by Mr. Clark Russell. The whole business of the brig 'Morning Star' is very rightly felt and spiritedly written; but the clothes, the books, and the money satisfy the reader's mind like things to eat. We are dealing here with the old cut-and-dry, legitimate interest of treasure trove. But even treasure trove can be made dull. There are few people who have not groaned under the plethora of goods that fell to the lot of the 'Swiss Family Robinson,' that dreary family. They found article after article, creature after creature, from milk kine to pieces of ordnance, a whole consignment; but no informing taste had presided over the selection, there was no smack or relish in the invoice; and all these riches left the fancy cold. The box of goods in Verne's 'Mysterious Island' is another case in point: there was no gusto and no glamour about that; it might have come from a shop. But the two hundred and seventy-eight Australian sovereigns on board the 'Morning Star' fell upon me like a surprise that I had expected; whole vistas of secondary stories, besides the one in hand, radiated forth from that discovery, as they radiate from a striking particular in life; and I was made for the moment as happy as a reader has the right to be.

To come at all at the nature of this quality of romance, we must bear in mind the peculiarity of our attitude to any art. No art produces illusion; in the theatre, we never forget that we are in the theatre; and while we read a story, we sit wavering between two minds, now merely clapping our hands at the merit of the performance, now condescending to take an active part in fancy with the characters. This last is the triumph of story-telling: when the reader consciously plays at being the hero, the scene is a good scene. Now in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering, or virtue. But the characters are still themselves; they are not us; the more clearly they are depicted, the more widely do they stand away from us, the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as a spectator. I cannot identify myself with Rawdon Crawley or with Eugene de Rastignac, for I have scarce a

hope or fear in common with them. It is not character, but incident, that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens, as we desire to have it happen to ourselves; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realised in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance. It is not only pleasurable things that we imagine in our daydreams; there are lights in which we are willing to contemplate even the idea of our own death; ways in which it seems as if it would amuse us to be cheated, wounded, or calumniated. It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail, and trick of circumstance shall be welcome to the reader's thoughts. Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child. It is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life. And when the game so chimes with his fancy that he can join in it with all his heart, when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance.

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. 'The Lady of the Lake' has no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among these slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, 'The Lady of the Lake,' or that direct, romantic opening—one of the most spirited and poetical in literature—'The stag at eve had drunk his fill.' The same strength and the same weaknesses adorn and disfigure the novels. In that ill-written, ragged book, 'The Pirate,' the figure of Cleveland—cast up by the sea on the resounding foreland of Dunrossness—moving, with the blood on his hands and the Spanish words on his tongue, among the simple islanders—singing a serenade under the window of his Shetland mistress—is conceived in the very highest manner of romantic invention. The words of his song, 'Through groves of palm,' sung in such a scene and by such a lover, clench, as in a nutshell, the emphatic contrast upon which the tale is built. In 'Guy Mannering,' again, every inci-

dent is delightful to the imagination ; and the scene when Harry Bertram lands at Ellangowan is a model instance of romantic method.

“ I remember the tune well,” he says, “ though I cannot guess what should at present so strongly recall it to my memory.” He took his flageolet from his pocket and played a simple melody. Apparently the tune awoke the corresponding associations of a damsel. . . . She immediately took up the song :—

Are these the links of Forth, she said ;
Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonny woods of Warroch Head
That I so fain would see ?

“ By heaven ! ” said Bertram, “ it is the very ballad.”

On this quotation two remarks fall to be made. First, as an instance of modern feeling for romance, this famous touch of the flageolet and the old song is selected by Miss Braddon for omission. Miss Braddon’s idea of a story, like Mrs. Todgers’s idea of a wooden leg, were something strange to have expounded. As a matter of personal experience, Meg’s appearance to old Mr. Bertram on the road, the ruins of Derncleugh, the scene of the flageolet, and the Dominie’s recognition of Harry, are the four strong notes that continue to ring in the mind after the book is laid aside. The second point is still more curious. The reader will observe a mark of excision in the passage as quoted by me. Well, here is how it runs in the original : ‘ A damsel, who, close behind a fine spring about half-way down the descent, and which had once supplied the castle with water, was engaged in bleaching linen.’ A man who gave in such copy would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper. Scott has forgotten to prepare the reader for the presence of the ‘ damsel ’ ; he has forgotten to mention the spring and its relation to the ruin ; and now, face to face with his omission, instead of trying back and starting fair, crams all this matter, tail foremost, into a single shambling sentence. It is not merely bad English, or bad style ; it is abominably bad narrative besides.

Certainly the contrast is remarkable ; and it is one that throws a strong light upon the subject of this paper. For here we have a man, of the finest creative instinct, touching with perfect certainty and charm the romantic junctures of his story ; and we find him utterly careless, almost, it would seem, incapable, in the technical matter of style ; and not only frequently weak, but fre-

quently wrong, in points of drama. In character parts, indeed, and particularly in the Scotch, he was delicate, strong, and truthful ; but the trite, obliterated features of too many of his heroes have already wearied two generations of readers. At times, his characters will speak with something far beyond propriety, with a true heroic note ; but on the next page they will be wading wearily forward with an ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole of words. The man who could conceive and write the character of Elspeth of the Craigburnfoot, as Scott has conceived and written it, had not only splendid romantic, but splendid tragic, gifts. How comes it, then, that he could so often fob us off with languid, inarticulate twaddle ?

It seems to me that the explanation is to be found in the very quality of his surprising merits. As his books are play to the reader, so were they play to him. He conjured up the beautiful with delight, but he had hardly patience to describe it. He was a great daydreamer, a seeēr of fit and beautiful and humorous visions ; but hardly a great artist ; hardly, in the manful sense, an artist at all. He pleased himself, and so he pleases us. Of the pleasures of his art he tasted fully ; but of its toils and vigils and distresses never man knew less. A great romantic—an idle child.

R. L. STEVENSON.

Some Points in American Speech and Customs.

I.

THAT the two great branches of the English people on the two sides of the Ocean should never weary of hearing about one another is surely only natural and creditable to both. I trust at least that those whose business it is to hear do not weary of hearing; for certainly those on either side who expect others to listen to them seem never weary of telling their experience of the other side. He who visits Britain from America, he who visits America from Britain, seems bound, if he be at all in the habit of using the pen, to use it forthwith to set down all or some of his impressions of the kindred land and its people. The thing seems to have taken its place as a formal duty which cannot be escaped. For my own part, I had hoped to escape it. I was so well treated in America that it really seemed unthankful, almost uncivil, for me to write anything about America. Yet, while I was there, I was asked over and over again whether I meant to write a book about America. All thought of writing a book I could honestly disclaim; and it was only gradually that the necessity of writing something less than a book forced itself upon me. It somehow became unavoidable to say something, and my graver thoughts, whatever they may be worth, on several important matters dealing with the condition and prospects of the United States I have tried to set forth in a graver quarter. But, having once begun, I still find something to say, and, being asked to write something for an early number of *LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE*, it came almost natural to me to think of talking about some other things which had struck me in my American visit, things bearing on matters of less dignity than the constitution of the Union and the historical relation of that constitution to those of England and other European lands.

I have elsewhere ventured on the saying, which to some may very likely seem a paradox, that I found less difference between

England and the United States than I find between England and Scotland. Perhaps I am not altogether qualified to judge, as I have certainly seen more of the United States than I have seen of Scotland. But so it certainly struck me; and I thought I saw one chief reason for the fact, namely, that English and American law are for the most part the same, while English and Scottish law are for the most part different. I believe that this difference of law affects many more things, much more of daily habit, many more of the common forms of speech, than would at first be thought. But, on this showing, I may possibly be asked whether I do not find a greater likeness between Ireland and either England or America than I find between either of these lands and Scotland. In going to Ireland, as in going to America, we cross the sea—certainly a much smaller part of it—and we then find ourselves in a land essentially of our own law, while in going to Scotland we keep within our own island, and yet find ourselves in a land essentially of another law. And it may happen that more superficial likenesses between America and Ireland may strike the British visitor to America pretty soon after his landing. It was an American visitor to England who remarked—I believe he did not complain—that in England he missed the sound of the Irish accent. And he who lands in America, above all if he lands, as most of us do, at New York—yet more, if he makes, as many of us do, his first acquaintance with dollars by spending a large number of them on a New York hackney carriage—will certainly remark, whether he welcomes or not, the sound of the Irish accent at the very beginning of his sojourn. But he may perhaps before long come to think that the presence of English law in Ireland and the presence of the Irish cabdriver in America are alike phenomena which are a little abnormal, though they may perhaps have a subtle connexion with one another. It may be that, if English rule, and along with it English law, had never found their way into Ireland, the Irish cabdriver would never have found his way to New York. And some may even go on to think that, if the history of mankind had taken that turn, three countries at least would be the happier for it. Anyhow the likeness of the law between England and Ireland does not bring with it the same kind of likeness between England and Ireland which the likeness of the law between England and America brings with it. And the reason is plain. In Ireland English law, and all that comes of the presence of English law, is something thoroughly foreign. In America the presence of English law, and all that comes of the

presence of English law, is something thoroughly natural and native. The law of Ireland is like the law of England, because Englishmen conquered Ireland and forced their own law upon the people of Ireland. The law of America is like the law of England, because Englishmen, freely settling in the new land of America, naturally took their own law with them. But Scotland was never either conquered in the same sense as Ireland nor settled in the same sense as America; Scotland therefore has never accepted English law, but keeps a wholly distinct law of her own growth.

Whatever therefore of likeness the English traveller in Ireland finds between that island and his own country is due to causes exactly opposite to those which bring about the likeness between England and America. In both cases the likeness is due to the presence of Englishmen in lands beyond the bounds of England; but it is due to their presence in altogether different characters. In the one case it is the presence of conquerors in an inhabited land; in the other it is the presence of settlers in what was practically an uninhabited land. Whatever likeness there is between England and Ireland, between America and Ireland, is only on the surface. Whatever likeness there is between England and Scotland, between England and America, between Scotland and America, all belongs to the very root of the matter. The likenesses and unlikenesses are of course in all cases due to historical causes. But in the one case they are due to comparatively modern historical events, after the nations severally concerned had put on their several national characters. In the other case they are due to those subtler causes, those earlier events, which ruled that the nations concerned should severally be what they are.

I said that the difference between England and Scotland seemed to me greater than the difference between England and America. I may add that the difference in each case is, to a great extent, a difference of the same kind. And here I must venture on a paradox. The difference between Scotland and England and the difference between America and England are both, I hold, largely owing to the fact that both Scotland and America are in many things more English than England itself. This is above all things true in the matter of language. People talk of 'Americanisms' and of 'Scotticisms,' as if they were in all cases corruptions, or at all events changes, introduced by Americans and Scotsmen severally into the existing English tongue. Now I do not deny that there are a good many 'Americanisms' and a few 'Scotticisms' which really answer that definition. But I

maintain that the great mass of both classes come under quite another head. What people commonly call an 'Americanism' or a 'Scotticism,' is, for the more part, some perfectly good English word or phrase, which has gone out of use in England, but which has lived on in America or in Scotland. To take two very obvious instances, most people, I feel sure, would call *bairn* a Scotch word; most people, I feel sure, would call *fall*, in the sense of *autumn*, not indeed an American word, but an American use of the word. It almost seems as if they believed that the use of the word *bairn* in any sense, and the use of the word *fall* in that particular sense, was something that the Scots and the Americans severally had devised of their own hearts, and in which England never had any share at any time. Yet nothing is more certain than that *bairn* is Scotch only so far as it has gone out of use in England and has lived on in Scotland. West-Saxon Alfred talks about his 'bairns,' while the word would certainly not have been understood by any true Scottish Kenneth or Malcolm. *Fall*, in the particular sense of autumn, is, in the like sort, American only so far as it has lived on in America while it has gone out of use in England. That is, if it has gone out of use in England; for I can distinctly remember the phrase 'spring and fall' in my childhood. By 'Scotch' in common talk is never meant the Gaelic speech of the true Scots; the word always means the speech of that part of Northern England which came under the rule of the kings of the true Scots. The English of that district was naturally less affected than Southern English by the Norman and French influences of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. It therefore keeps a crowd of good and strong English words which have dropped out of use in Southern English. On the other hand, the later connexion between France and Scotland, and the respect shown in Scotland to the Roman law, have brought in a good many French and Latin words which are unknown in Southern English. The word 'American,' as applied to language, means, in the mouth of a comparative philologer, the native languages of the American continent, exactly as 'Scottish' ought to mean the language of the original Scots. In common use it does mean the English language, as spoken and written in the United States. I say the United States, because I am not quite clear whether Canada would come in or not. Now in the matter of language, as in most other matters, the United States have followed the usual law of colonies. A colony is always exposed to two opposite tendencies, which, though opposite, are found not uncommonly

to work busily side by side. There is a greater tendency to stand still, and there is also a greater tendency to go ahead, than there is in the mother country. A colony which has no chance of going ahead is likely to stand very still indeed, much stiller than an old country. A small isolated colony, say a small island, is likely to become one of the most old-world places to be found. It will in many things keep on the state of things which existed in the mother country at the time of the settlement, long after that state of things has, in the mother country itself, become a thing of the past. It has become a proverb that, if you wish to see old France, you must go to French Canada. And for many things, if you wish to see old England, you must go to New England. In the United States the tendency to go ahead has certainly reached as great a developement as in any part of the world ; but it has by no means driven out the opposite tendency to stand still. I need not say that I noticed many things in which our kinsfolk beyond the Ocean had—sometimes, I thought, for good, sometimes, I thought, for evil—left us behind. But I also noticed some things in which they had—sometimes, I thought, for good, sometimes for evil—lagged behind us. There is a vast deal of conservative feeling, or at least of conservative habit, at work in the United States, at any rate in the older States. There is much about them in speech, in manners, in institutions, which has a thoroughly old-world character, much that has lived on from the England of the seventeenth century, much in which the circumstances of the settlers called back into being things far older than the England of the seventeenth century. When anything that seems strange to a British visitor in American speech or American manners is not quite modern on the face of it, it is pretty certain to be something which was once common to the older and the newer England, but which the newer England has kept, while the older England has cast it aside. And it is not very hard to distinguish between usages which have this venerable sanction and usages which have come in only yesterday. It does not need any very great effort to discern between words, phrases, ways of looking at things, which have been handed on from the days of John Smith of Virginia or Roger Williams of Rhode Island, and words, phrases, ways of looking at things, which have come in under the reign of the stump orator, the interviewer, and that deadliest of all foes to the English tongue and to every other tongue, the schoolmaster.

I have drawn a parallel between the Scottish and the American forms of English ; but it is a parallel which is far

from holding good in every point. The Scottish—that is, the Northern—form of English is, in the strictest sense, a dialect. That is to say, it is an independent form of the language, which might have come to set the standard of the language and to become the polite and literary speech, instead of that form of the language to which that calling actually fell. Or rather, as long as Scotland was politically distinct from the Southern England, the Northern form of English actually did set the standard within its own range. It was the polite and literary speech within the English-speaking lands of the Scottish kings. It is only the political union of the kingdoms which has brought Northern English down from that place of dignity, and has caused Southern English to set the standard of speech through the whole of Great Britain. Whatever a Scotsman may speak, he now writes after the manner of a Southern Englishman. But the Englishman of America does not write—he is in no way called on to write—after the manner of the Englishman of Britain, but after his own manner. For his manner of speech, however it may differ from the speech of the Englishman of Britain, does not differ as a dialect strictly so called. And this is none the less true, though it is quite certain that several dialects of English are spoken in America. Some Americans, specially curious in such matters, profess to mark some difference of speech in almost every State, and to be able in most cases to say from what State a man comes. To this amount of discernment I naturally can make no claim; but I can see some marked points of difference between the speech of the Northern and Southern States, taken as wholes. And I can further see that the speech of Virginia agrees in some points with the speech of Wessex, points in which it differs from the speech of either Boston. Thus, for instance, the surname *Carter*, which to us does not sound specially patrician, but which in Virginia is reckoned to be at least as noble as *Berkeley*, if not as *Montmorency*, is locally sounded *Kyartah*. Now if the utterance of the latter half of the word may seem to be that of a London lounger, the utterance of the former part is genuine West-Saxon, whether of the days of Alfred or the days of Victoria. But if we come to compare the English of the United States, as a whole, with the English of Britain as a whole, there is no difference of dialect strictly so called between them. There is not the same kind of difference which there is between the English of the Northern and Southern parts of Britain itself. The test seems to lie in the fact which I have just spoken of. The speaker of Northern English finds it needful to adopt, for certain purposes, the Southern form of

English, instead of that which is natural to him. But no American speaker or writer ever thinks it needful to adopt a British form of his own language, any more than a British speaker or writer thinks it needful to adopt an American form.

And yet it is perfectly plain that the English tongue common to Britain and America is not spoken and written in exactly the same way in Britain and in America. The man of either land carries with him marks characteristic of his own land which will not fail to bewray him to men of the other land. But those marks are not of the nature of dialectic difference strictly so called. I told my American hearers, in some of the lectures which I gave in several places, that between them and us I could see no difference of language, no difference of dialect, but that there was a considerable difference of local usage. Now local usage in matter of speech, whether it be of old standing or of quite modern origin, is altogether another thing from real difference of dialect. Real difference of dialect is a matter which lies pretty much beyond the control of the human will. It is often unconscious, it is almost always involuntary; if any reason can be given for the difference, it is a reason which does not lie on the surface, but which needs to be found out by philological research. But mere local usage, though it may have become quite immemorial, is not thus wholly beyond our own control. There is something conscious about it, something at any rate which can be changed by an immediate act of the will. For mere difference of local usage in language, we can often give some very obvious reason, which needs no philological research at all to find it out. For instance, what we may call the language of railways is largely different in England and in America. But this is no difference of dialect, only difference of local usage. In each case a particular word has been chosen rather than another. In each case the word which has been chosen sounds odd to those who are used to the other. In each case we can sometimes see the reason for the difference of usage, and sometimes not. No obvious reason can be given why in England we speak of the 'railway,' while in America they commonly speak of the 'railroad.' But no one on either side can have the least difficulty in understanding the word which is used on the other side. And indeed the American might say that, in this as in some greater and older matters, he has stuck to the older usage. Though 'railroad' is now seldom used in England, my own memory tells me that it was the more usual name when the thing itself first came in. 'Railway,' for what reason I know not, has displaced 'railroad' in England,

and it is worth remarking that it is doing the same in some parts of America. Here one can see no reason for one usage rather than the other, and no advantage in one usage rather than the other. But when the American goes on to speak, as he often does, of the railroad simply as 'the road,' his language may sometimes be a little misleading, but it is easy to see the reason for it. In England we had everywhere roads before we had railroads ; the railroad needed a qualifying syllable to distinguish it from the older and better known kind of road. But in a large part of America the railroad is actually the oldest road ; there is therefore no such need to distinguish it from any other. This to us seems rather like a state of things in which printing should be familiar, but writing unknown ; but it is a state of things which the circumstances of our time have brought about in a large part of the United States. That is to say, the two tendencies of which I spoke have been at work side by side. The tendency to lag behind has hindered the growth of a good system of roads ; the tendency to go ahead has brought in a gigantic system of railroads. Here we see the reason for the different use of language. We see it also in the different names for the thing which, when the railroad is made, runs along its rails. In Britain it is a 'carriage' ; in America it is a 'car.' This at least is by no means a distinction without a reason. The different forms of English railway-carriage might afford some curious matters for observation to a philosopher of the school of Mr. Tylor. Nowhere can the doctrine of survivals be better studied. The original railway-carriage was the old-fashioned carriage put to a new use ; the innovation lay in putting several such carriages together. It is only quite gradually that what we may call a picture of the old carriage has disappeared from our trains. This is as distinct a survival as the useless buttons on a modern coat which once fastened up a lappet, helped to carry a sword, or discharged some other useful function now forgotten. But the American 'car' was not made after any such pattern. It is strictly a 'car' ; at any rate it is quite unlike the special meaning attached to the word 'carriage.' If anything other than itself was present to the mind of the deviser of the American car, it was rather the cabin of a steamer than any earlier kind of carriage ; and such an origin is suggested by the American phrase of being 'on board' a train, which I fancy is never heard in England. Among European things, the older kind of American car is most like that which is used on the Swiss railways, as if there were some kind of federal symbolism in both. And now another form

of the American car is making its way into England, and with the thing the name comes too. For 'car' then there is a good reason; but it is hard to see why a railway-station should be called a 'dépôt.' The word 'station' is not etymologically English; it is therefore not so good a name as the German *bahnhof*; but it is quite naturalized and familiar, while 'dépôt' is still foreign, and hardly becomes less so by being sounded as if it were Italian and written *dipo*. But on several American railroads the name is beginning to give way to the more reasonable word 'station.'

All these instances taken from railway matters are necessarily very modern; I will take another which I have no doubt is as old as English settlement in America. In England we use the word 'shop' both for a place where things are made or done and for a place where things are sold. In America the word is confined to the place where things are made or done, as 'barber-shop,' 'carpenter-shop'; a place where things are sold is a 'store.' Less old most likely, but certainly not of yesterday, is the usage which confines the name 'corn' to one particular kind of corn, that namely which we know as 'Indian corn' or maize. I heard a most distinguished Englishman—Britisher, at all events—lecture to an American audience on the history of the English corn-laws; and I doubted in my own mind whether all his hearers would understand that he was mainly speaking of wheat. Now neither of these forms of speech comes among the cases in which the colony has kept on the elder usage of the mother country. This hardly needs proof in the case of 'corn.' But the narrower use of that word is exactly analogous to the narrower use of the word 'beast' among English graziers, and of the word 'bird' among English sportsmen. In the case of 'shop,' the word is perfectly good English both in the wider and in the narrower sense, as it is in a good many other senses besides. But I cannot find that 'store' was ever used in England in the American sense, till it came in quite lately in the case of 'co-operative stores.' But I have not the slightest doubt that a perfectly good reason for the difference of usage could be found in some circumstance of early colonial life. I can fancy that in one of the first New England settlements a shop would really be a 'store,' in a sense in which it hardly is now on either side of Ocean. And the 'co-operative store' may be so called for some reason of the same kind, or it may be because the name is thought to be finer, or it may be a mere transplantation of the American name. The 'shop' or the 'store' suggests its contents; and I dare say that

there is some good reason, though I do not see it, why the contents of one particular kind of 'store' should be specially called 'dry goods.' The contents of some other kinds of store seem to the untechnical mind to be equally dry. But the phrase, however it arose, is just like our phrase 'hardware,' which does not take in all things that are in themselves hard. Then again, I have known some foolish Britishers mock at such phrases as 'town lot,' 'city lot'; but these are perfectly good and natural names for things to which we have nothing exactly answering in modern England. The constant use of the phrase 'block,' in showing a man his way about a town, struck me at first as odd. But it is a perfectly good use. American towns are built in blocks, in a way in which the elder English towns at least are not. The 'city lot' suggests the 'city' itself, of which we certainly hear much more in America than in England. The use of the word 'city' in England is rather strange. At some time later than Domesday and earlier than Henry the Eighth, it came to be confined on one hand and extended on the other, so as to take in all places that were bishops' sees, and no places that were not. In America a 'city' means what we should call a corporate town or municipal borough. But in England the word 'city' is seldom used, except either in rather formal speech or else to distinguish the real city of London from the other parts of the 'province covered with houses' which in common speech bears its name. In America the word 'city' is in constant use, where we should use the word 'town,' even though the place spoken of bears the formal rank of a city. I remember getting into strange cross-purposes with an American gentleman who, in speaking of a visit to London, went on speaking of 'the city,' while he meant parts of the province covered with houses far away from what I understood by that name. 'Town,' in New England at least, has another meaning. A 'town' or 'township' may contain a 'city,' or it may not. On the other hand, one often hears the phrase 'down town,' even in New York itself. New York, by the way, calls itself a 'metropolis'; in what sense of the word it is not easy to guess, as it can hardly be because it is the seat of a Roman Catholic archbishopric. And I have even known a New York paper speak of the rest of the United States as 'the provinces.' That insulting name is bad enough when it is applied to an English shire; it is surely worse still when it is applied to a sovereign commonwealth.

The words 'metropolis' and 'provinces,' used in this way, I venture to call slang, whether the city which is set up above

its fellows is London or New York. Anyhow this use of them is in no way distinctively American; indeed the misuse of the word 'provinces' is, I fancy, excessively rare in America, and it is certainly borrowed from England. Each side of the Ocean unluckily finds it easier to copy the abuses of the other side than to stick to the noble heritage which is common to both. But even in the abuses of language on either side there is no strictly dialectic difference; still less is there any such difference in those legitimate varieties of local usage which have grown up out of the different circumstances of the two countries. But many of these last have thus much in common with dialectic differences, that they have come of themselves without any fixed purpose, even though we often can, as we cannot in the case of strictly dialectic difference, see why they have come. It is otherwise when one word is used rather than another under the notion of its being finer. This is plainly the case with 'dépôt,' and I suppose it is also with 'conductor' for 'guard.' But one cannot see either that 'railroad' is finer than 'railway,' or that 'railway' is finer than 'railroad.' If 'store' may, from one point of view, be thought finer than 'shop,' the increased fineness is quite accidental; it is another thing when any man on either side calls his shop or store his 'establishment.' In nearly all these cases the difference matters nothing to one whose object is to save some relics of the good old English tongue. One way is for the most part as good as the other; let each side of the Ocean stick to its own way, if only to keep up those little picturesque differences which are really a gain when the substance is essentially the same. This same line of thought might be carried out in a crowd of phrases, old and new, in which British and American usage differs, but in which neither usage can be said to be in itself better or worse than the other. Each usage is the better in the land in which it has grown up of itself. A good British writer and a good American writer will write in the same language and the same dialect; but it is well that each should keep to those little peculiarities of established and reasonable local usage which will show on which side of the Ocean he writes. It is not so with slang, on whichever side it has grown up. It is hard to define slang; but we commonly know it when we hear it. Slang, I should think, was always conscious in its origin. A word or phrase is used, not unconsciously under the natural compulsion of some good reason for its use, but consciously, indeed of set purpose, because it is thought to sound fine or clever. It presently

comes to be used by crowds of people as a matter of course, without any such thought ; but its origin sticks to it ; it remains slang, and never becomes the true yoke-fellow of words and phrases which have grown up of themselves as they were really needed. Or again, there may be a word or phrase which is good enough in its turn with others, but which, if used constantly to the exclusion of others, seems to partake of the nature of slang. Some favourite American forms of speech seem to us in this way to savour of slang, and I believe that some favourite British forms of speech in the like sort savour of slang to an American. To take a very small example, perhaps the better because it is so very small, the word 'certainly' is a very natural form of granting any request ; but in England we should hardly use it except in granting a request of some little importance, or one about the granting of which there might be some little doubt ; American use extends it to the very smallest civilities of the table. 'I guess' I have always stood up for, as a perfectly good form, if only it is not always used to the exclusion of other forms. 'I reckon' is as good English as English can be ; it is only at 'I calculate' that one would begin to kick ; but I do not think that 'I calculate' is often heard in the kind of American society to which I was used. It might however be taken as an instance of the way in which technical and special words get into common use, sometimes on one side of the Ocean, sometimes on the other, and which seem odd to those who are not used to them. Let me take an Oxford story of perhaps five-and-thirty years ago. A story was told in a common-room of an American clergyman who was in the habit of getting into theological discussions with his bishop, and who was sometimes a little puzzled as to the way in which he ought to behave in such cases towards his spiritual superior. 'I had a respect for his office,' said the presbyter ; 'but I did not like to *endorse* all that he said.' A fit of laughter went round the room. Thirty-five years ago there seemed something irresistibly ludicrous in applying a commercial word like 'endorse' to agreement or disagreement on a theological matter. I am quite sure that no one would laugh at it now either in America or in Britain ; we all endorse, or decline to endorse, positions on all questions, theological, political, philosophical, or any other. But I doubt whether anyone in England would talk of 'the balance of the day,' a phrase which I have heard in America, though I should doubt its being common. Purely legal phrases too seem to get more easily into common use in America than here, and I am told

that the same is the case with medical phrases also. I was a good deal amazed at first to see 'Real Estate,' 'Real Estate Office,' written up as the mark of a place of business. I knew my Blackstone well enough to have no difficulty as to what was meant; but it looked to me very much as if anybody had advertised a 'Jetsam and Flotsam office.' But I presently found that 'real estate,' 'to buy real estate,' were phrases in daily use both in the newspapers and in common talk. Now certainly no one in England would, if a man had bought houses or lands, say that he had bought 'real estate.' He would, if he did not define the particular thing bought, be more likely to veil it under the general name of 'property.'

In pronunciation strictly so called, I mean the utterance of particular words as distinguished from any general tone, accent, intonation, and the like, I remarked less difference between America and England than there is in the use of the words themselves. Of certain dialectic differences within the United States themselves I have already said something. When the Virginian says 'doe' and 'floe' for 'door' and 'floor,' it is as truly a case of dialect in the strictest sense as the difference between the dialect of Somerset and the dialect of Yorkshire. But I noticed some prevalent differences of pronunciation in America which were in no sense dialectical, but which were clearly adopted on a principle. I fancy that something that may be called a principle has more influence on pronunciation in America than it has in England. This remark is not my own; I found it, or something to the same effect, in an American periodical. It was there remarked that in America there is a large class of people who read a great deal without very much education, and who are apt to draw their ideas of pronunciation rather from the look of the words in the book than from any traditional way of uttering them. This will most likely account for some cases, specially for one on which I shall have something to say presently. But there are other cases in which the American usage, though it sounds odd to a British ear, is strictly according to the analogy of the English tongue. I heard in America 'ópponent' and 'ínquiry,' and very odd they sounded. But they simply follow the English rule of throwing the accent as far back as we can, without regard to the Latin or Greek quantity. If we say 'théâtre'—which, by the way, is accidentally right, according to the Greek *accent*—'áuditor,' 'áblative,' and a crowd of other words of the same kind, we may as well say 'ópponent' and

‘inquiry.’ The only reason against so doing is, I suppose, that they are a little hard to say, which is doubtless the reason why, while everybody says ‘áuditor’ and ‘sénator,’ nobody says ‘spéctator.’ But there is one word on which I wish to speak a little more at large, as a clear instance in which the schoolmaster or the printed text or some other artificial influence has brought about a distinct change in pronunciation. The word ‘clerk’ is in England usually sounded ‘clark,’ while in America it is usually sounded ‘clerk.’ I say ‘usually,’ because I did once hear ‘clerk’ in England—from a London shopman—and because I was told at Philadelphia that some old people there still said ‘clark,’ and—a most important fact—that those who said ‘clark’ also said ‘marchant.’ Now it is quite certain that ‘clark’ is the older pronunciation, the pronunciation which the first settlers must have taken with them. This is proved by the fact that the word as a surname—and it is one of the commonest of surnames—is always sounded, and most commonly written, ‘Clark’ or ‘Clarke.’ I suspect that ‘Clerk’ as a surname, so spelled, is distinctively ‘Scotch,’ in the modern sense of that word. Also in writers of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the word itself is very often written ‘clark’ or ‘clarke.’ But of course ‘clerk’ was at all times the more clerkly spelling, as showing the French and Latin origin of the word. It is plain therefore that the pronunciation ‘clerk’ is not traditional, but has been brought in artificially, out of a notion of making the sound conform to the spelling. But ‘clerk’ is no more the true sound than ‘clark’; the true sound is ‘clairk,’ like French ‘clerc,’ and a Scotsman would surely sound it so. ‘Clark’ and ‘clerk’ are both mere approximations to the French sound, and ‘clark’ is the older, and surely the more natural approximation. The truth is that we cannot sound ‘clerk’ as it is spelled; that is, we cannot give the *e* before *r* the same sound which we give it when it is followed by any other consonant. We cannot sound *e* in ‘clerk’ exactly as we sound *e* in ‘tent.’ This applies to a crowd of words, some of Teutonic, some of Latin origin, in which the spelling is *e*, but in which the sound has, just as in ‘clerk,’ fluctuated between *a* and *u*. The old people at Philadelphia who said ‘clark’ also said ‘marchant.’ And quite rightly, for they had on their side both older English usage and, in this case, the French spelling itself. The sound ‘murchant’ has come in, both in England and in America, by exactly the same process as that by which the sound ‘clerk’ has come in in America, but not in

England. In these cases the words are of Latin origin; so is 'German,' which people used to sound 'Jarman'—as in the memorable story of the Oxford University preacher who wished the 'Jarman theology' at the bottom of the 'Jarman Ocean.' But the same thing happens to a crowd of Teutonic proper names, as Derby, Berkeley, Berkshire, Bernard, Bertram, and others. In these names the original Old-English vowel is 'eo'; the modern spelling and the different modern pronunciations are mere approximations, just as when the vowel is the French or Latin *e*. One has heard 'Darby' and 'Durby,' 'Barkeley' and 'Burkeley'; and though the *a* sound is now deemed the more polite, yet I believe that fashion has fluctuated in this matter, as in most others. And fashion, whether fluctuating or not, is at least inconsistent; if it is polite to talk of 'Barkshire' and 'Darby,' it is no longer polite to talk about 'Jarman' and 'Jarsey.' But in all these cases there can be no doubt that the *a* sound is the older. The names of which I have spoken are often spelled with an *a* in old writers; and the *a* sound has for it the witness of the most familiar spelling of several of the names when used as surnames. 'Darby,' 'Barclay,' 'Barnard,' 'Bartram,' all familiar surnames, show what sound was usual when their present spelling was fixed. Tourists, I believe, talk of the 'Durwent' (as they call the Dove the 'Duv'); but the Derwent at Stamfordbridge is undoubtedly Darwent, while the more northern stream of the name is locally Darwin, a form which has become illustrious as a surname. Now in words of this kind, while British use is somewhat fluctuating, I believe that America has universally decided for the *u* sound. But there can be no doubt that, whether in England or in America, the sound of 'Durby' or 'Burtram' is simply an attempt to adapt the sound to the spelling, while 'Darby' and 'Bartram' are the genuine traditional sounds. I see another instance, not quite of the same kind, of the influence of the schoolmaster, in the name which in some parts of America is given to the last letter of the alphabet. This in New England is always *zee*; in the South it is *zed*, while Pennsylvania seems to halt between two opinions. Now *zed* is a very strange name. Has it anything to do with Greek *zeta*? or does it come from the old form *izzard*, which was not quite forgotten in my childhood, and which I was delighted to find remembered in America also? (*Izzard* is said to be for 's hard,' though surely *z* is rather *s* soft.) But anyhow *zee* is clearly a schoolmaster's device to get rid of the strange-sounding *zed*, and to make *z* follow the analogy of

other letters. But the analogy is wrong. *Z* ought not to follow the analogy of *b*, *d*, *t*, but that of *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, and above all of its brother *s*. If we are not to have *zed*, the name should clearly be, not *zee* but *ez*. But it is a comfort that, besides *izzard*, I also found 'ampussy and'—I hardly know how to write it—remembered beyond the Ocean. I may very likely be called on to explain on this side. 'Ampussy and,' that is, in full, '*and* per *se*, *and*,' is the name of the sign for the conjunction *and*, &, which used to be printed at the end of the alphabet. May I quote a riming nursery alphabet of my own childhood? The letters have all done their several services towards the apple-pie that was to be divided among them :

Then *AND* came, though not one of the letters,
 And, bowing, acknowledged them all as his betters ;
 And, hoping it might not be deemed a presumption,
 Remained all their honours' most humble conjunction.

The 'humble conjunction' seems to have fared yet worse than Lord Macaulay's chaplain, and to have got no apple-pie at all.

Quite distinct from the pronunciation of particular words are any general characteristics in the way of utterance which speakers of English on either side may notice in speakers of English on the other side. Americans constantly notice what they call the 'English intonation,' the 'English accent,' and I have even seen it called the 'horrible English intonation.' Now I am not very clear what this accent or intonation is, and the less so as I have sometimes been told that I myself have it, sometimes that I have it not, but that I speak like an American. As no man knows exactly how he himself speaks, I cannot judge which description is the truer. On the other hand we Britishers are apt to remark in Americans something which we are tempted to call by the shorter word 'twang,' a description less civil perhaps than 'intonation' without an adjective, but less uncivil surely than 'horrible intonation.' As to the origin of this 'twang' I have heard various opinions. Some trace it to a theological, some to a merely geographical cause. It has been said to be an inheritance from the Puritans as Puritans; others say that it is simply the natural utterance of East-Anglia, without reference to sect or party. As an American mark, the thing to be most remarked about it is, that, though very common, it is far from universal. It would be in no way wonderful either if everybody spoke with a twang or if nobody spoke with a twang. But the

facts, as far as I can see, are these. Some people have the twang very strongly; some have it not at all. Some, after speaking for a long time without it, will bring it in in a particular word or sentence; in others it is strongly marked when a few words are uttered suddenly, but dies off in the course of a longer conversation. And I distinctly marked that it was far more universal among women than among men. I could mention several American friends from whose speech—unless possibly in particular technical words—no one could tell to which side of the Ocean they belonged, while the utterance of their wives was distinctively American. To us the kind of utterance of which I speak seems specially out of place in the mouth of a graceful and cultivated woman; but I have heard hints back again that the speech of graceful and cultivated Englishwomen has sometimes had just the same effect on American hearers. But, on whichever side our taste lies, there can be little doubt that the American utterance, be it Puritan, East-Anglian, or anything else, is no modern innovation, but has come by genuine tradition from the seventeenth century.

It is otherwise with some peculiarities which concern, not the natural utterance of words to the ear, but their artificial representation to the eye. If the schoolmaster is a deadly foe to language, English or any other, the printer is a foe no less deadly. Half the unhistorical spellings which disfigure our printed language come from the vagaries of half-learned printers, on which side of the Ocean matters very little. As for Latin words, one is sometimes tempted to say, let them spell them as they please; but it is hard when Teutonic 'rime,' a word which so many Romance languages have borrowed, is turned into 'rhyme,' merely because some printer's mind was confused between English 'rime' and Greek 'rhythm.' So with specially American spelling-fancies. If anyone chooses to spell words like 'traveller' with one *l*, it looks odd, but it is really not worth disputing about. Nor is it worth disputing about 'color' or 'colour,' 'honor' or 'honour,' and the like. But when it comes to 'armor,' still more when it comes to 'neighbor,' one's Latin back in the former case, one's Teutonic back in the other, is put up. Did he who first wrote 'armor' fancy that 'armor' was a Latin word like 'honor' or 'color'? By all means let *armatura*, if anyone chooses, be cut short into *armure*; but let us be spared such a false analogy as *armor*. 'Arbor' for 'arbour' brings out more strongly the delusion of those who, having a Latin tree on the brain, doffed

Teutonic 'harbour' of its aspirate. But the most unkindest cut of all is when Old-English 'neáhgebúr,' which, according to the universal rule of the language, becomes in modern English 'neighbour,' is also turned into 'neighbor.' Did anybody, even a printer or a dictionary-maker, really fancy that the last three letters of 'neighbour' had anything in common with the last three letters of 'honour'? It is surely hardly needful to say that Old-English *ú* is in modern English consistently represented by *ou*; 'hús' becomes 'house'; 'súð' becomes 'south'; 'út' becomes 'out'—and 'neáhgebúr' becomes 'neighbour.' American printers too have some odd ways in other matters, specially as to their way of dividing words when part of a word has to be in one line and part in another. Thus 'nothing' will be divided, not as 'no-thing,' but as 'noth-ing,' as if it were the patronymic of a name 'Noth.' Yet surely even a printer must have known that 'nothing' is 'no-thing' and nothing else. So again 'knowledge' is divided as 'knowl-edge,' suggesting rather the side of a hill than the occupation or condition of one who knows. It is really quite possible that the *d* may have been thrust into 'knowledge'—better written 'knowlege'—from some thought of a *ledge*. Anyhow one suspects that very few people know that *ledge* in 'knowledge' and 'lock' in 'wedlock' are one and the same ending. 'Wedlock' at least is safe from being divided as 'wedl-ock,' because everybody thinks that it has something to do with a lock and key.

It would be easy to pile together a far longer list of differences of usage in matter of speech between England and America. But I have perhaps brought together enough to illustrate my main general positions. I have tried to show that so-called 'Americanisms' are not to be at once cast aside, as many people in England are inclined to cast them aside, as if they were necessarily corruptions of the common speech, as if it proved something against a form of words to show that it is usual in America, but that it is not usual in England. Abuses of language undoubtedly arise in America, just as they do in England. It is hardly worth while trying to count up and find out in which country they are the more common. Possibly the go-ahead side of the younger English land may win for it the first place. But, if so, it is merely a difference of degree, not of kind. I fancy that 'racial' is American; but 'sociology' is undoubtedly British. On the other hand, the conservative side of the American character has led to the survival in America of

many good English words and phrases which have gone out of use in England, and which ignorant people therefore mistake for American inventions. In other cases, again, differences of usage between the two countries are fully explained by differences of circumstances between the two countries. In some cases, again, usages which cannot be called correct, but which differ from mere abuses of language, have been brought in—in either country—through mistaken analogies or other processes of that kind. In these different ways there has come to be a certain distinction between the received British and the received American use of the common English tongue, a distinction which commonly makes it easy to see from which side of Ocean a man comes. But there is no real difference of language, not even any real difference of dialect; the speech of either side is understood without an effort by the men of the other side, and the differences are largely of a kind in which neither usage can be said to be in itself better or worse than the other. Such is the general result of what I have to say about language and about some points specially connected with language. In another article I hope to carry on the same line of argument with regard to some other matters.

EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

The Black Poodle.

I HAVE set myself the task of relating in the course of this story, without suppressing or altering a single detail, the most painful and humiliating episode in my life.

I do this, not because it will give me the least pleasure, but simply because it affords me an opportunity of extenuating myself which has hitherto been wholly denied to me.

As a general rule I am quite aware that to publish a lengthy explanation of one's conduct in any questionable transaction is not the best means of recovering a lost reputation ; but in my own case there is one to whom I shall never more be permitted to justify myself by word of mouth—even if I found myself able to attempt it. And as she could not possibly think worse of me than she does at present, I write this, knowing it can do me no harm, and faintly hoping that it may come to her notice and suggest a doubt whether I am quite so unscrupulous a villain, so consummate a hypocrite, as I have been forced to appear in her eyes.

The bare chance of such a result makes me perfectly indifferent to all else : I cheerfully expose to the derision of the whole reading world the story of my weakness and my shame, since by doing so I may possibly rehabilitate myself somewhat in the good opinion of one person.

Having said so much, I will begin my confession without further delay :—

My name is Algernon Weatherhead, and I may add that I am in one of the Government departments ; that I am an only son, and live at home with my mother.

We had had a house at Hammersmith until just before the period covered by this history, when, our lease expiring, my mother decided that my health required country air at the close of the day, and so we took a 'desirable villa-residence' on one of the many new building estates which have lately sprung up in such profusion in the home counties.

We have called it 'Wistaria Villa.' It is a pretty little place, the last of a row of detached villas, each with its tiny rustic

carriage gate and gravel sweep in front, and lawn enough for a tennis court behind, which lines the road leading over the hill to the railway station.

I could certainly have wished that our landlord, shortly after giving us the agreement, could have found some other place to hang himself in than one of our attics, for the consequence was that a housemaid left us in violent hysterics about every two months, having learnt the tragedy from the tradespeople, and naturally 'seen a somethink' immediately afterwards.

Still it is a pleasant house, and I can now almost forgive the landlord for what I shall always consider an act of gross selfishness on his part.

In the country a next-door neighbour is something more than a mere numeral; he is a possible acquaintance, who will at least consider a new-comer as worth the experiment of a call. I soon knew that 'Shuturgarden,' the next house to our own, was occupied by a Colonel Currie, a retired Indian officer, and often, as across the low boundary wall I caught a glimpse of a graceful girlish figure flitting about amongst the rose-bushes in the neighbouring garden, I would lose myself in pleasant anticipations of a time not far distant when the wall which separated us would be (metaphorically) levelled.

I remember—ah, how vividly!—the thrill of excitement with which I heard from my mother on returning from town one evening that the Curries had called, and seemed disposed to be all that was neighbourly and kind.

I remember, too, the Sunday afternoon on which I returned their call—alone, as my mother had already done so during the week. I was standing on the steps of the Colonel's villa waiting for the door to open, when I was startled by a furious snarling and yapping behind, and, looking round, discovered a large poodle in the act of making for my legs.

He was a coal-black poodle, with half of his right ear gone, and absurd little thick moustaches at the end of his nose; he was shaved in the sham-lion fashion, which is considered, for some mysterious reason, to improve a poodle, but the barber had left sundry little tufts of hair which studded his haunches capriciously.

I could not help being reminded, as I looked at him, of another black poodle which Faust entertained for a short time, with unhappy results, and I thought that a very moderate degree of incantation would be enough to bring the fiend out of this brute.

He made me intensely uncomfortable, for I am of a slightly

nervous temperament, with a constitutional horror of dogs and a liability to attacks of diffidence on performing the ordinary social rites under the most favourable conditions, and certainly the consciousness that a strange and apparently savage dog was engaged in worrying the heels of my boots was the reverse of reassuring.

The Currie family received me with all possible kindness: 'So charmed to make your acquaintance, Mr. Weatherhead,' said Mrs. Currie, as I shook hands. 'I see,' she added pleasantly, 'you've brought the doggie in with you.' As a matter of fact, I had brought the doggie in at the ends of my coat-tails, but it was evidently no unusual occurrence for visitors to appear in this undignified manner, for she detached him quite as a matter of course, and, as soon as I was sufficiently collected, we fell into conversation.

I discovered that the Colonel and his wife were childless, and the slender willowy figure I had seen across the garden wall was that of Lilian Roseblade, their niece and adopted daughter. She came into the room shortly afterwards, and I felt, as I went through the form of an introduction, that her sweet fresh face, shaded by soft masses of dusky brown hair, more than justified all the dreamy hopes and fancies with which I had looked forward to that moment.

She talked to me in a pretty, confidential appealing way, which I have heard her dearest friends censure as childish and affected, but I thought then that her manner had an indescribable charm and fascination about it, and the memory of it makes my heart ache now with a pang that is not all pain.

Even before the Colonel made his appearance I had begun to see that my enemy, the poodle, occupied an exceptional position in that household. It was abundantly clear by the time I took my leave.

He seemed to be the centre of their domestic system, and even lovely Lilian revolved contentedly around him as a kind of satellite; he could do no wrong in his owner's eyes, his prejudices (and he was a narrow-minded animal) were rigorously respected, and all domestic arrangements were made with a primary view to his convenience.

I may be wrong, but I cannot think that it is wise to put any poodle upon such a pedestal as that. How this one in particular, as ordinary a quadruped as ever breathed, had contrived to impose thus upon his infatuated proprietors, I never could understand, but

so it was—he even engrossed the chief part of the conversation, which after any lull seemed to veer round to him by a sort of natural law.

I had to endure a long biographical sketch of him—what a Society paper would call an ‘anecdotal photo’—and each fresh anecdote seemed to me to exhibit the depraved malignity of the beast in a more glaring light, and render the doting admiration of the family more astounding than ever.

‘Did you tell Mr. Weatherhead, Lily, about Bingo’ (Bingo was the poodle’s preposterous name) ‘and Tacks? No? Oh, I *must* tell him that—it’ll make him laugh. Tacks is our gardener down in the village (d’ye know Tacks?). Well, Tacks was up here the other day, nailing up some trellis work at the top of a ladder, and all the time there was Master Bingo sitting quietly at the foot of it looking on, wouldn’t leave it on any account. Tacks said he was quite company for him. Well, at last, when Tacks had finished and was coming down, what do you think that rascal there did? Just sneaked quietly up behind and nipped him in both calves and ran off. Been looking out for that the whole time! Ha, ha!—deep that, eh?’

I agreed with an inward shudder that it was very deep, thinking privately that, if this was a specimen of Bingo’s usual treatment of the natives, it would be odd if he did not find himself deeper still before—probably *just* before—he died.

‘Poor faithful old doggie!’ murmured Mrs. Currie; ‘he thought Tacks was a nasty burglar, didn’t he? he wasn’t going to see Master robbed, was he?’

‘Capital house-dog, sir,’ struck in the Colonel. ‘Gad, I shall never forget how he made poor Heavisides run for it the other day! Ever met Heavisides of the Bombay Fusiliers? Well, Heavisides was staying here, and the dog met him one morning as he was coming down from the bath-room. Didn’t recognise him in “pyjamas” and a dressing-gown, of course, and made at him. He kept poor old Heavisides outside the landing window on the top of the cistern for a quarter of an hour, till I had to come and raise the siege!’

Such were the stories of that abandoned dog’s blunderheaded ferocity to which I was forced to listen, while all the time the brute sat opposite me on the hearthrug, blinking at me from under his shaggy mane, with his evil bleared eyes, and deliberating where he would have me when I rose to go.

This was the beginning of an intimacy which soon displaced

all ceremony. It was very pleasant to go in there after dinner, even to sit with the Colonel over his claret and hear more stories about Bingo, for afterwards I could go into the pretty drawing-room and take my tea from Lilian's hands and listen while she played Schubert to us in the summer twilight.

The poodle was always in the way, to be sure, but even his ugly black head seemed to lose some of its ugliness and ferocity when Lilian laid her pretty hand on it.

On the whole I think that the Currie family were well disposed towards me ; the Colonel considering me as a harmless specimen of the average eligible young man—which I certainly was—and Mrs. Currie showing me favour for my mother's sake, for whom she had taken a strong liking.

As for Lilian, I believed I saw that she soon suspected the state of my feelings towards her and was not displeased by it. I looked forward with some hopefulness to a day when I could declare myself with no fear of a repulse.

But it was a serious obstacle in my path that I could not secure Bingo's good opinion on any terms. The family would often lament this pathetically themselves. 'You see,' Mrs. Currie would observe in apology, 'Bingo is a dog that does not attach himself easily to strangers'—though for that matter I thought he was unpleasantly ready to attach himself to *me*.

I did try hard to conciliate him. I brought him propitiatory buns—which was weak and ineffectual, as he ate them with avidity, and hated me as bitterly as ever, for he had conceived from the first a profound contempt for me and a distrust which no blandishments of mine could remove. Looking back now, I am inclined to think it was a prophetic instinct that warned him of what was to come upon him through my instrumentality.

Only his approbation was wanting to establish for me a firm footing with the Curries, and perhaps determine Lilian's wavering heart in my direction ; but, though I wooed that inflexible poodle with an assiduity I blush to remember, he remained obstinately firm.

Still, day by day, Lilian's treatment of me was more encouraging ; day by day I gained in the esteem of her uncle and aunt ; I began to hope that soon I should be able to disregard canine influence altogether.

Now there was one inconvenience about our villa (besides its flavour of suicide) which it is necessary to mention here. By

common consent all the cats of the neighbourhood had selected our garden for their evening reunions. I fancy that a tortoiseshell kitchen cat of ours must have been a sort of leader of local feline society—I know she was ‘at home,’ with music and recitations, on most evenings.

My poor mother found this interfere with her after-dinner nap, and no wonder, for if a cohort of ghosts had been ‘shrieking and squealing,’ as Calpurnia puts it, in our back garden, or it had been fitted up as a crèche for a nursery of goblin infants in the agonies of teething, the noise could not possibly have been more unearthly.

We sought for some means of getting rid of the nuisance: there was poison of course, but we thought it would have an invidious appearance and even lead to legal difficulties, if each dawn were to discover an assortment of cats expiring in hideous convulsions in various parts of the same garden.

Firearms, too, were open to objection and would scarcely assist my mother’s slumbers, so for some time we were at a loss for a remedy. At last, one day, walking down the Strand, I chanced to see (in an evil hour) what struck me as the very thing—it was an air-gun of superior construction displayed in a gunsmith’s window. I went in at once, purchased it, and took it home in triumph; it would be noiseless, and would reduce the local average of cats without scandal—one or two examples, and feline fashion would soon migrate to a more secluded spot.

I lost no time in putting this to the proof. That same evening I lay in wait after dusk at the study window, protecting my mother’s repose. As soon as I heard the long-drawn wail, the preliminary sputter, and the wild stampede that followed, I let fly in the direction of the sound. I suppose I must have something of the national sporting instinct in me, for my blood was tingling with excitement; but the feline constitution assimilates lead without serious inconvenience, and I began to fear that no trophy would remain to bear witness to my marksmanship.

But all at once I made out a dark indistinct form slinking in from behind the bushes. I waited till it crossed a belt of light which streamed from the back kitchen below me, and then I took careful aim and pulled the trigger.

This time at least I had not failed—there was a smothered yell, a rustle—and then silence again. I ran out with the calm pride of a successful revenge to bring in the body of my victim, and I found underneath a laurel, no predatory tom-cat, but (as

the discerning reader will no doubt have foreseen long since) the quivering carcase of the Colonel's black poodle !

I intend to set down here the exact unvarnished truth, and I confess that at first, when I knew what I had done, I was *not* sorry. I was quite innocent of any intention of doing it, but I felt no regret. I even laughed—madman that I was—at the thought that there was the end of Bingo at all events ; that impediment was removed, my weary task of conciliation was over for ever !

But soon the reaction came ; I realised the tremendous nature of my deed, and shuddered. I had done that which might banish me from *Lilian*'s side for ever ! All unwittingly I had slaughtered a kind of sacred beast, the animal around which the Currie household had wreathed their choicest affections ! How was I to break it to them ? Should I send Bingo in with a card tied to his neck and my regrets and compliments ? That was too much like a present of game. Ought I not to carry him in myself ? I would wreath him in the best crape, I would put on black for him—the Curries would hardly consider a taper and a white sheet, or sackcloth and ashes, an excessive form of atonement—but I could not grovel to quite such an abject extent.

I wondered what the Colonel would say. Simple and hearty as a general rule, he had a hot temper on occasions, and it made me ill as I thought, would he and, worse still, would *Lilian* believe it was really an accident ? They knew what an interest I had in silencing the deceased poodle—would they believe the simple truth ?

I vowed that they *should* believe me. My genuine remorse and the absence of all concealment on my part would speak powerfully for me. I would choose a favourable time for my confession ; that very evening I would tell all.

Still I shrank from the duty before me, and as I knelt down sorrowfully by the dead form and respectfully composed his stiffening limbs, I thought that it was unjust of Fate to place a well-meaning man, whose nerves were not of iron, in such a position.

Then, to my horror, I heard a well-known ringing tramp on the road outside, and smelt the peculiar fragrance of a Burmese cheroot. It was the Colonel himself, who had been taking out the doomed Bingo for his usual evening run.

I don't know how it was exactly, but a sudden panic came over me. I held my breath, and tried to crouch down unseen

behind the laurels ; but he had seen me, and came over at once to speak to me across the hedge.

He stood there, not two yards from his favourite's body ! Fortunately it was unusually dark that evening.

'Ha, there you are, eh ?' he began heartily ; 'don't rise, my boy, don't rise.' I was trying to put myself in front of the poodle, and did not rise—at least, only my hair did.

'You're out late, ain't you ?' he went on ; 'laying out your garden, hey ?'

I could not tell him that I was laying out his poodle ! My voice shook as, with a guilty confusion that was veiled by the dusk, I said it was a fine evening—which it was not.

'Cloudy, sir,' said the Colonel, 'cloudy—rain before morning, I think. By the way, have you seen anything of my Bingo in here ?'

This was the turning point. What I *ought* to have done was to say mournfully, 'Yes, I'm sorry to say I've had a most unfortunate accident with him—here he is—the fact is, I'm afraid I've *shot* him !'

But I couldn't. I could have told him at my own time, in a prepared form of words—but not then. I felt I must use all my wits to gain time and fence with the questions.

'Why,' I said, with a leaden airiness, 'he hasn't given you the slip, has he ?'

'Never did such a thing in his life !' said the Colonel warmly ; 'he rushed off after a rat or a frog or something a few minutes ago, and as I stopped to light another cheroot I lost sight of him. I thought I saw him slip in under your gate, but I've been calling him from the front there and he won't come out.'

No, and he never *would* come out any more. But the Colonel must not be told that just yet. I temporised again : 'If,' I said unsteadily, 'if he had slipped in under the gate, I should have seen him. Perhaps he took it into his head to run home ?'

'Oh, I shall find him on the doorstep, I expect, the knowing old scamp ! Why, what d'ye think was the last thing he did now ?'

I could have given him the very latest intelligence ; but I dared not. However, it was altogether too ghastly to kneel there and laugh at anecdotes of Bingo told across Bingo's dead body ; I could not stand that ! 'Listen,' I said suddenly, 'wasn't that his bark ? There again ; it seems to come from the front of your house, don't you think ?'

'Well,' said the Colonel, 'I'll go and fasten him up before he's off again. How your teeth are chattering—you've caught a chill, man—go indoors at once, and, if you feel equal to it, look in half an hour later, about grog time, and I'll tell you all about it. Compliments to your mother. Don't forget—about grog time!' I had got rid of him at last, and I wiped my forehead, gasping with relief. I would go round in half an hour and, then I should be prepared to make my melancholy announcement. For, even then, I never thought of any other course, until suddenly it flashed upon me with terrible clearness that my miserable shuffling by the hedge had made it impossible to tell the truth! I had not told a direct lie, to be sure, but then I had given the Colonel the impression that I had denied having seen the dog. Many people can appease their consciences by reflecting that, whatever may be the effect their words produce, they did contrive to steer clear of a downright lie. I never quite knew where the distinction lay, morally, but there *is* that feeling—I have it myself.

Unfortunately, prevarication has this drawback, that, if ever the truth comes to light, the prevaricator is in just the same case as if he had lied to the most shameless extent, and for a man to point out that the words he used contained no absolute falsehood will seldom restore confidence.

I might of course still tell the Colonel of my misfortune, and leave him to infer that it had happened after our interview, but the poodle was fast becoming cold and stiff, and they would most probably suspect the real time of the occurrence.

And then Lilian would hear that I had told a string of falsehoods to her uncle over the dead body of their idolised Bingo—an act, no doubt, of abominable desecration, of unspeakable profanity in her eyes!

If it would have been difficult before to prevail on her to accept a bloodstained hand, it would be impossible after that. No, I had burnt my ships, I was cut off for ever from the straightforward course; that one moment of indecision had decided my conduct in spite of me—I must go on with it now and keep up the deception at all hazards.

It was bitter. I had always tried to preserve as many of the moral principles which had been instilled into me as can be conveniently retained in this grasping world, and it had been my pride that, roughly speaking, I had never been guilty of an unmistakable falsehood.

But henceforth, if I meant to win Lilian, that boast must be

relinquished for ever! I should have to lie now with all my might, without limit or scruple, to dissemble incessantly, and 'wear a mask,' as the poet Bunn beautifully expressed it long ago, 'over my hollow heart.' I felt all this keenly—I did not think it was right—but what was I to do?

After thinking all this out very carefully, I decided that my only course was to bury the poor animal where he fell and say nothing about it. With some vague idea of precaution I first took off the silver collar he wore, and then hastily interred him with a garden-trowel and succeeded in removing all traces of the disaster.

I fancy I felt a certain relief in the knowledge that there would now be no necessity to tell my pitiful story and risk the loss of my neighbours' esteem.

By-and-by, I thought, I would plant a rose-tree over his remains, and some day, as Lilian and I, in the noontide of our domestic bliss, stood before it admiring its creamy luxuriance, I might (perhaps) find courage to confess that the tree owed some of that luxuriance to the long-lost Bingo.

There was a touch of poetry in this idea that lightened my gloom for the moment.

I need scarcely say that I did not go round to Shuturgarden that evening. I was not hardened enough for that yet—my manner might betray me, and so I very prudently stayed at home.

But that night my sleep was broken by frightful dreams. I was perpetually trying to bury a great gaunt poodle, which would persist in rising up through the damp mould as fast as I covered him up. . . . Lilian and I were engaged, and we were in church together on Sunday, and the poodle, resisting all attempts to eject him, forbade our banns with sepulchral barks. . . . It was our wedding-day, and at the critical moment the poodle leaped between us and swallowed the ring. . . . Or we were at the wedding breakfast, and Bingo, a grizzly black skeleton with flaming eyes, sat on the cake and would not allow Lilian to cut it. Even the rose-tree fancy was reproduced in a distorted form—the tree grew and every blossom contained a miniature Bingo, which barked; and as I woke I was desperately trying to persuade the Colonel that they were ordinary dog-roses.

I went up to the office next day with my gloomy secret gnawing my bosom, and whatever I did, the spectre of the murdered poodle rose before me. For two days after that I dared not go near the

Curries, until at last one evening after dinner I forced myself to call, feeling that it was really not safe to keep away any longer.

My conscience smote me as I went in. I put on an unconscious easy manner, which was such a dismal failure that it was lucky for me that they were too much engrossed to notice it.

I never before saw a family so stricken down by a domestic misfortune as the group I found in the drawing-room, making a dejected pretence of reading or working. We talked at first—and hollow talk it was—on indifferent subjects, till I could bear it no longer, and plunged boldly into danger.

‘I don’t see the dog,’ I began. ‘I suppose you—you found him all right the other evening, Colonel?’ I wondered as I spoke whether they would not notice the break in my voice, but they did not.

‘Why, the fact is,’ said the Colonel heavily, gnawing his grey moustache, ‘we’ve not heard anything of him since: he’s—he’s run off!’

‘Gone, Mr. Weatherhead; gone without a word!’ said Mrs. Currie plaintively, as if she thought the dog might at least have left an address.

‘I wouldn’t have believed it of him,’ said the Colonel; ‘it has completely knocked me over. Haven’t been so cut up for years—the ungrateful rascal!’

‘Oh, Uncle!’ pleaded Lilian, ‘don’t talk like that; perhaps Bingo couldn’t help it—perhaps some one has s-s-shot him!’

‘Shot!’ cried the Colonel angrily. ‘By heaven! if I thought there was a villain on earth capable of shooting that poor inoffensive dog, I’d—— Why *should* they shoot him, Lilian? Tell me that! I—I hope you won’t let me hear you talk like that again. You don’t think he’s shot, eh, Weatherhead?’

I said—Heaven forgive me!—that I thought it highly improbable.

‘He’s not dead!’ cried Mrs. Currie. ‘If he were dead I should know it somehow—I’m sure I should! But I’m certain he’s alive. Only last night I had such a beautiful dream about him. I thought he came back to us, Mr. Weatherhead, driving up in a hansom cab, and he was just the same as ever—only he wore blue spectacles, and the shaved part of him was painted a bright red. And I woke up with the joy—so, you know, it’s sure to come true!’

It will be easily understood what torture conversations like

these were to me, and how I hated myself as I sympathised and spoke encouraging words concerning the dog's recovery, when I knew all the time he was lying hid under my garden mould. But I took it as part of my punishment, and bore it all uncomplainingly; practice even made me an adept in the art of consolation—I believe I really was a great comfort to them.

I had hoped that they would soon get over the first bitterness of their loss, and that Bingo would be first replaced and then forgotten in the usual way; but there seemed no signs of this coming to pass.

The poor Colonel was too plainly fretting himself ill about it; he went pottering about forlornly—advertising, searching, and seeing people, but all of course to no purpose, and it told upon him. He was more like a man whose only son and heir had been stolen, than an Anglo-Indian officer who had lost a poodle. I had to affect the liveliest interest in all his inquiries and expeditions, and to listen to, and echo, the most extravagant eulogies of the departed, and the wear and tear of so much duplicity made me at last almost as ill as the Colonel himself.

I could not help seeing that Lilian was not nearly so much impressed by my elaborate concern as her relatives; and sometimes I detected an incredulous look in her frank brown eyes that made me very uneasy. Little by little, a rift widened between us, until at last in despair I determined to know the worst before the time came when it would be hopeless to speak at all. I chose a Sunday evening as we were walking across the green from church in the golden dusk, and then I ventured to speak to her of my love. She heard me to the end, and was evidently very much agitated. At last she murmured that it could not be, unless—no, it never could be now.

‘Unless what?’ I asked. ‘Lilian—Miss Roseblade, something has come between us lately: you will tell me what that something is, won’t you?’

‘Do you want to know *really*?’ she said, looking up at me through her tears. ‘Then I’ll tell you: it—it’s Bingo!’

I started back overwhelmed. Did she know all? If not, how much did she suspect? I must find out that at once! ‘What about Bingo?’ I managed to pronounce, with a dry tongue.

‘You never l-loved him when he was here,’ she sobbed; ‘you know you didn’t!’

I was relieved to find it was no worse than this.

'No,' I said candidly, 'I did not love Bingo. Bingo didn't love *me*, Lilian; he was always looking out for a chance of nipping me somewhere. Surely you won't quarrel with me for that!'

'Not for that,' she said; 'only, why do you pretend to be so fond of him now, and so anxious to get him back again? Uncle John believes you, but *I* don't. I can see quite well that you wouldn't be glad to find him. You could find him easily if you wanted to!'

'What do you mean, Lilian?' I said hoarsely. 'How could I find him?' Again I feared the worst.

'You're in a Government office,' cried Lilian, 'and if you only chose, you could easily g-get G-Government to find Bingo! What's the use of Government if it can't do that? Mr. Travers would have found him long ago if I'd asked him!'

Lilian had never been so childishly unreasonable as this before, and yet I loved her more madly than ever; but I did not like this allusion to Travers, a rising barrister, who lived with his sister in a pretty cottage near the station, and had shown symptoms of being attracted by Lilian.

He was away on circuit just then, luckily, but at least even he would have found it a hard task to find Bingo—there was comfort in that.

'You know that, isn't just, Lilian,' I observed. 'But only tell me what you want me to do?'

'Bub—bub—bring back Bingo!' she said.

'Bring back Bingo!' I cried in horror. 'But suppose I *can't*—suppose he's out of the country, or—or dead, what then, Lilian?'

'I can't help it,' she said; 'but I don't believe he *is* out of the country or dead. And while I see you pretending to Uncle that you cared awfully about him, and going on doing nothing at all, it makes me think you're not quite—quite *sincere*! And I couldn't possibly marry anyone while I thought that of him. And I shall always have that feeling unless you find Bingo!'

It was of no use to argue with her; I knew Lilian by that time. With her pretty caressing manner she united a latent obstinacy which it was hopeless to attempt to shake. I feared, too, that she was not quite certain as yet whether she cared for me or not, and that this condition of hers was an expedient to gain time.

I left her with a heavy heart. Unless I proved my worth by bringing back Bingo within a very short time, Travers would probably have everything his own way. And Bingo was dead!

However, I took heart. I thought that perhaps if I could succeed by my earnest efforts in persuading Lilian that I really was doing all in my power to recover the poodle, she might relent in time, and dispense with his actual production.

So, partly with this object, and partly to appease the remorse which now revived and stung me deeper than before, I undertook long and weary pilgrimages after office hours. I spent many pounds in advertisements; I interviewed dogs of every size, colour, and breed, and of course I took care to keep Lilian informed of each successive failure. But still her heart was not touched, she was firm; if I went on like that, she told me I was certain to find Bingo one day—then, but not before, would her doubts be set at rest.

I was walking one day through the somewhat squalid district which lies between Bow Street and High Holborn, when I saw, in a small theatrical costumier's window, a handbill stating that a black poodle had 'followed a gentleman' on a certain date, and if not claimed and the finder remunerated before a stated time, would be sold to pay expenses.

I went in and got a copy of the bill to show Lilian, and although by that time I scarcely dared to look a poodle in the face, I thought I would go to the address given and see the animal, simply to be able to tell Lilian I had done so.

The gentleman whom the dog had very unaccountably followed was a certain Mr. William Blagg, who kept a little shop near Endell Street, and called himself a bird-fancier, though I should scarcely have credited him with the necessary imagination. He was an evil-browed ruffian in a fur cap, with a broad broken nose and little shifty red eyes, and after I had told him what I wanted, he took me through a horrible little den, stacked with piles of wooden, wire, and wicker prisons, each quivering with restless, twittering life, and then out into a back yard, in which were two or three rotten old kennels and tubs. 'That there's him,' he said, jerking his thumb to the farthest tub; 'foller'd me all the way 'ome from Kihington Gardings, *he* did. Kim out, will yer?'

And out of the tub there crawled slowly, with a snuffling whimper and a rattling of his chain, the identical dog I had slain a few evenings before!

At least, so I thought for a moment, and felt as if I had seen a spectre; the resemblance was so exact—in size, in every detail, even to the little clumps of hair about the hind parts, even to the

lop of half an ear, this dog might have been the 'doppel-gänger' of the deceased Bingo. I suppose, after all, one black poodle is very like any other black poodle of the same size, but the likeness startled me.

I think it was then that the idea occurred to me that here was a miraculous chance of securing the sweetest girl in the whole world, and at the same time atoning for my wrong by bringing back gladness with me to Shuturgarden. It only needed a little boldness; one last deception, and I could embrace truthfulness once more.

Almost unconsciously, when my guide turned round and asked 'Is that there dawg yourn?' I said hurriedly: 'Yes, yes—that's the dog I want, that—that's Bingo!'

'He don't seem to be a puttin' of 'isself out about seeing you again,' observed Mr. Blagg, as the poodle studied me with a calm interest.

'Oh, he's not exactly *my* dog, you see,' I said; 'he belongs to a friend of mine!'

He gave me a quick furtive glance. 'Then maybe you're mistook about him,' he said; 'and I can't run no risks. I was a goin' down in the country this 'ere werry evenin' to see a party as lives at Wistaria Willa,—he's been a hadwertisin about a black poodle, he has!'

'But look here,' I said, 'that's *me*.'

He gave me a curious leer. 'No offence, you know, guv'nor,' he said, 'but I should wish for some evidence as to that afore I part with a vallyable dawg like this 'ere!'

'Well,' I said, 'here's one of my cards; will that do for you?'

He took it and spelt it out with a pretence of great caution, but I saw well enough that the old scoundrel suspected that if I had lost a dog at all, it was not this particular dog. 'Ah,' he said, as he put it in his pocket, 'if I part with him to you, I must be cleared of all risks. I can't afford to get into trouble about no mistakes. Unless you likes to leave him for a day or two, you must pay accordin', you see.'

I wanted to get the hateful business over as soon as possible. I did not care what I paid—Lilian was worth all the expense! I said I had no doubt myself as to the real ownership of the animal, but I would give him any sum in reason, and would remove the dog at once.

And so we settled it. I paid him an extortionate sum, and came

away with a duplicate poodle, a canine counterfeit which I hoped to pass off at Shuturgarden as the long-lost Bingo.

I know it was wrong—it even came unpleasantly near dog stealing—but I was a desperate man. I saw Lilian gradually slipping away from me, I knew that nothing short of this could ever recall her, I was sorely tempted, I had gone far on the same road already, it was the old story of being hung for a sheep. And so I fell.

Surely some who read this will be generous enough to consider the peculiar state of the case, and mingle a little pity with their contempt.

I was dining in town that evening and took my purchase home by a late train; his demeanour was grave and intensely respectable; he was not the animal to commit himself by any flagrant indiscretion—he was gentle and tractable, too, and in all respects an agreeable contrast in character to the original. Still, it may have been the after-dinner workings of conscience, but I could not help fancying that I saw a certain look in the creature's eyes, as if he were aware that he was required to connive at a fraud, and rather resented it.

If he would only be good enough to back me up! Fortunately, however, he was such a perfect facsimile of the outward Bingo, that the risk of detection was really inconsiderable.

When I got him home, I put Bingo's silver collar round his neck—congratulating myself on my forethought in preserving it, and took him in to see my mother. She accepted him as what he seemed, without the slightest misgiving; but this, though it encouraged me to go on, was not decisive, the spurious poodle would have to encounter the scrutiny of those who knew every tuft on the genuine animal's body!

Nothing would have induced me to undergo such an ordeal as that of personally restoring him to the Curries. We gave him supper, and tied him up on the lawn, where he howled dolefully all night, and buried bones.

The next morning I wrote a note to Mrs. Currie, expressing my pleasure at being able to restore the lost one, and another to Lilian, containing only the words, 'Will you believe *now* that I am sincere?' Then I tied both round the poodle's neck and dropped him over the wall into the Colonel's garden just before I started to catch my train to town.

* * * * *

I had an anxious walk home from the station that evening; I went round by the longer way, trembling the whole time lest I

should meet any of the Currie household, to which I felt myself entirely unequal just then. I could not rest until I knew whether my fraud had succeeded, or if the poodle to which I had entrusted my fate had basely betrayed me ; but my suspense was happily ended as soon as I entered my mother's room. 'You can't think how delighted those poor Curries were to see Bingo again,' she said at once, and they said such charming things about you, Algry—Lilian, particularly—quite affected she seemed, poor child ! And they wanted you to go round and dine there and be thanked to-night, but at last I persuaded them to come to us instead. And they're going to bring the dog to make friends. Oh, and I met Frank Travers ; he's back from circuit again now, so I asked him in too, to meet them !'

I drew a deep breath of relief. I had played a desperate game—but I had won ! I could have wished, to be sure, that my mother had not thought of bringing in Travers on that of all evenings—but I hoped that I could defy him after this.

The Colonel and his people were the first to arrive ; he and his wife being so effusively grateful that they made me very uncomfortable indeed ; Lilian met me with downcast eyes, and the faintest possible blush, but she said nothing just then. Five minutes afterwards, when she and I were alone together in the conservatory, where I had brought her on pretence of showing a new begonia, she laid her hand on my sleeve and whispered, almost shyly, 'Mr. Weatherhead,—Algernon ! Can you ever forgive me for being so cruel and unjust to you ?' And I replied that, upon the whole, I could.

We were not in that conservatory long, but, before we left it, beautiful Lilian Roseblade had consented to make my life happy. When we re-entered the drawing-room, we found Frank Travers, who had been told the story of the recovery, and I noticed his jaws fall as he glanced at our faces, and noted the triumphant smile which I have no doubt mine wore, and the tender dreamy look in Lilian's soft eyes. Poor Travers, I was sorry for him, although I was not fond of him. Travers was a good type of the rising young Common Law barrister ; tall, not bad-looking, with keen dark eyes, black whiskers, and the mobile forensic mouth, which can express every shade of feeling, from deferential assent to cynical incredulity ; possessed, too, of an endless flow of conversation that was decidedly agreeable, if a trifle too laboriously so, he had been a dangerous rival. But all that was over now—he saw it himself at once, and during dinner sank into dismal silence, gazing pathetically at Lilian, and sighing almost obtrusively between the

courses. His stream of small talk seemed to have been cut off at the main.

‘You’ve done a kind thing, Weatherhead,’ said the Colonel. ‘I can’t tell you all that dog is to me and how I missed the poor beast. I’d quite given up all hope of ever seeing him again, and all the time there was Weatherhead, Mr. Travers, quietly searching all London till he found him! I shan’t forget it. It shows a really kind feeling.’

I saw by Travers’s face that he was telling himself he would have found fifty Bingos in half the time—if he had only thought of it; he smiled a melancholy assent to all the Colonel said, and then began to study me with an obviously depreciatory air.

‘You can’t think,’ I heard Mrs. Currie telling my mother, ‘how really *touching* it was to see poor dear Bingo’s emotion at seeing all the old familiar objects again! He went up and sniffed at them all in turn, quite plainly recognising everything. And he was quite put out to find that we had moved his favourite ottoman out of the drawing-room. But he *is* so penitent, too, and so ashamed of having run away; he hardly dares to come when John calls him, and he kept under a chair in the hall all the morning—he wouldn’t come in here either, so we had to leave him in your garden.’

‘He’s been sadly out of spirits all day,’ said Lilian; ‘he hasn’t bitten one of the tradespeople.’

‘Oh, *he’s* all right, the rascal!’ said the Colonel, cheerily; ‘he’ll be after the cats again as well as ever in a day or two.’

‘Ah, those cats!’ said my poor innocent mother. ‘Algy, you haven’t tried the air-gun on them again lately, have you? They’re worse than ever.’

I troubled the Colonel to pass the claret; Travers laughed for the first time. ‘That’s a good idea,’ he said, in that carrying ‘bar-mess’ voice of his; ‘an air-gun for cats, ha, ha! Make good bags, eh, Weatherhead?’ I said that I did, *very* good bags, and felt I was getting painfully red in the face.

‘Oh, Algy is an excellent shot—quite a sportsman,’ said my mother. ‘I remember, oh, long ago, when we lived at Hammersmith, he had a pistol, and he used to strew crumbs in the garden for the sparrows, and shoot at them out of the pantry window; he frequently hit one.’

‘Well,’ said the Colonel, not much impressed by these sporting reminiscences, ‘don’t go rolling over our Bingo by mistake, you know, Weatherhead, my boy. Not but what you’ve a sort of

right after this—only don't. I wouldn't go through it all twice for anything.'

'If you really won't take any more wine,' I said hurriedly, addressing the Colonel and Travers, 'suppose we all go out and have our coffee on the lawn? It—it will be cooler there.' For it was getting very hot indoors, I thought.

I left Travers to amuse the ladies—he could do no more harm now; and taking the Colonel aside, I seized the opportunity, as we strolled up and down the garden path, to ask his consent to Lilian's engagement to me. He gave it cordially. 'There's not a man in England,' he said, 'that I'd sooner see her married to, after to-day. You're a quiet steady young fellow, and you've a good kind heart. As for the money, that's neither here nor there; Lilian won't come to you without a penny, you know. But really, my boy, you can hardly believe what it is to my poor wife and me to see that dog. Why, bless my soul, look at him now! What's the matter with him, eh?'

To my unutterable horror I saw that that miserable poodle, after begging unnoticed at the tea-table for some time, had retired to an open space before it, where he was now industriously standing on his head.

We gathered round and examined the animal curiously, as he continued to balance himself gravely in his abnormal position. 'Good gracious, John,' cried Mrs. Currie, 'I never saw Bingo do such a thing before in his life!'

'Very odd,' said the Colonel, putting up his glasses; 'never learnt that from *me*.'

'I tell you what I fancy it is,' I suggested wildly. 'You see, he was always a sensitive, excitable animal, and perhaps the—the sudden joy of his return has gone to his head—*upset* him, you know.'

They seemed disposed to accept this solution, and indeed I believe they would have credited Bingo with every conceivable degree of sensibility; but I felt myself that if this unhappy animal had many more of these accomplishments I was undone, for the original Bingo had never been a dog of parts.

'It's very odd,' said Travers reflectively, as the dog recovered his proper level; 'but I always thought that it was half the *right* ear that Bingo had lost?'

'So it is, isn't it?' said the Colonel. 'Left, eh? Well, I thought myself it was the *right*.'

My heart almost stopped with terror—I had altogether for-

gotten that. I hastened to set the point at rest. 'Oh, it *was* the left,' I said positively; 'I know it because I remember so particularly thinking how odd it was that it *should* be the left ear, and not the right!' I told myself this should be positively my last lie.

'*Why odd?*' asked Frank Travers, with his most offensive Socratic manner.

'My dear fellow, I can't tell you,' I said impatiently; 'everything seems odd when you come to think at all about it.'

'Algernon,' said Lilian later on, 'will you tell Aunt Mary and Mr. Travers, and—and me, how it was you came to find Bingo? Mr. Travers is quite anxious to hear all about it.'

I could not very well refuse; I sat down and told the story, all my own way. I painted Blagg, perhaps, rather bigger and blacker than life, and described an exciting scene, in which I recognised Bingo by his collar in the streets, and claimed and bore him off then and there in spite of all opposition.

I had the inexpressible pleasure of seeing Travers grinding his teeth with envy as I went on, and feeling Lilian's soft, slender hand glide silently into mine as I told my tale in the twilight.

All at once, just as I reached the climax, we heard the poodle barking furiously at the hedge which separated my garden from the road. 'There's a foreign-looking man staring over the hedge,' said Lilian; 'Bingo always *did* hate foreigners.'

There certainly was a swarthy man there, and, though I had no reason for it then, somehow my heart died within me at the sight of him.

'Don't be alarmed, sir,' cried the Colonel; 'the dog won't bite you, unless there's a hole in the hedge anywhere.'

The stranger took off his small straw hat with a sweep. 'Ah, I am not afraid,' he said, and his accent proclaimed him a Frenchman; 'he is not enrage at me. May I ask, is it pairmeet to speak wiz Misterre Vezzered?'

I felt I must deal with this person alone, for I feared the worst, and asking them to excuse me, I went to the hedge and faced the Frenchman with the frightful calm of despair. He was a short, stout little man, with blue cheeks, sparkling black eyes, and a vivacious walnut-coloured countenance; he wore a short black alpaca coat and a large white cravat with an immense oval malachite brooch in the centre of it, which I mention because I found myself staring mechanically at it during the interview.

‘My name is Weatherhead,’ I began, with the bearing of a detected pickpocket. ‘Can I be of any service to you?’

‘Of a great service,’ he said emphatically; ‘you can restore to me the poodle vich I see zere!’

Nemesis had called at last in the shape of a rival claimant. I staggered for an instant; then I said, ‘Oh, I think you are under a mistake—that dog is not mine.’

‘I know it,’ he said; ‘zere ‘as been leetle mistake, so if ze dog is not to you, you give him back to me, *hein?*’

‘I tell you,’ I said, ‘that poodle belongs to the gentleman over there.’ And I pointed to the Colonel, seeing that it was best now to bring him into the affair without delay.

‘You are wrong,’ he said doggedly; ‘ze poodle is my poodle! And I was direct to you—it is your name on ze carte?’ And he presented me with that fatal card which I had been foolish enough to give to Blagg as a proof of my identity. I saw it all now; the old villain had betrayed me, and to earn a double reward had put the real owner on my track.

I decided to call the Colonel at once and attempt to brazen it out with the help of his sincere belief in the dog.

‘Eh, what’s that; what’s it all about?’ said the Colonel, bustling up, followed at intervals by the others.

The Frenchman raised his hat again. ‘I do not want to make trouble,’ he began, ‘but zere is leetle mistake. My word of honour, sare, I see my own poodle in your garden. Ven I appeal to zis gentilman to restore ‘im he reffer me to you.’

‘You must allow me to know my own dog, sir,’ said the Colonel. ‘Why, I’ve had him from a pup. Bingo, old boy, you know your master, don’t you?’

But the brute ignored him altogether, and began to leap wildly at the hedge, in frantic efforts to join the Frenchman. It needed no Solomon to decide *his* ownership!

‘I tell you, you ‘ave got ze wrong poodle—it is my own dog, my Azor! He remember me well, you see? I lose him it is three, four days. . . . I see a nottice zat he is found, and ven I go to ze address, zey tell me, “Oh, he is claim, he is gone wiz a strangaire who has advertise.” Zey show me ze placard, I follow ‘ere, and ven I arrive, I see my poodle in ze garden before me!’

‘But look here,’ said the Colonel impatiently; ‘it’s all very well to say that, but how can you prove it? I give you *my* word that the dog belongs to *me*! You must prove your claim, eh, Travers?’

‘Yes,’ said Travers judicially, ‘mere assertion is no proof: it’s oath against oath, at present.’

‘Attend an instant—your poodle was he ’ighly train, was he well instruct—a dog viz tricks, eh?’

‘No, he’s not,’ said the Colonel; ‘I don’t like to see dogs taught to play the fool—there’s none of that nonsense about *him*, sir!’

‘Ah, remark him well, then. Azor, mon chou, danse donc!’

And on the foreigner’s whistling a lively air, that infernal poodle rose on his hind legs and danced solemnly about half-way round the garden! We inside followed his movements with dismay. ‘Why, dash it all!’ cried the disgusted Colonel, ‘he’s dancing along like a d——d mountebank! But it’s my Bingo for all that!’

‘You are not convince? You shall see more. Azor, ici, Bees-marc, Azor!’ (the poodle barked ferociously). ‘Gambetta!’ (he wagged his tail and began to leap with joy). ‘Meurs pour la Patrie!’—and the too accomplished animal rolled over as if killed in battle!

‘Where could Bingo have picked up so much French?’ cried Lilian incredulously.

‘Or so much French history?’ added that serpent Travers.

‘Shall I command ’im to jump, or reverse ’imself?’ inquired the obliging Frenchman.

‘We’ve seen that, thank you,’ said the Colonel gloomily. ‘Upon my word, I don’t know what to think. It can’t be that that’s not my Bingo after all—I’ll never believe it!’

I tried a last desperate stroke. ‘Will you come round to the front?’ I said to the Frenchman; ‘I’ll let you in, and we can discuss the matter quietly.’ Then, as we walked back together, I asked him eagerly what he would take to abandon his claims and let the Colonel think the poodle was his after all.

He was furious—he considered himself insulted; with great emotion he informed me that the dog was the pride of his life (it seems to be the mission of black poodles to serve as domestic comforts of this priceless kind!), that he would not part with him for twice his weight in gold.

‘Conceive,’ he began as we joined the others, ‘zat zis gentilman ’ere ’as offer me money for ze dog! He agrees zat it is to me, you see? Ver well zen, zere is no more to be said!’

‘Why, Weatherhead, have *you* lost faith too, then?’ said the Colonel.

I saw that it was no good—all I wanted now was to get out of it creditably and get rid of the Frenchman. ‘I’m sorry to say,’ I replied, ‘that I’m afraid I’ve been deceived by the extraordinary likeness. I don’t think, on reflection, that that *is* Bingo!’

‘What do you think, Travers?’ asked the Colonel.

‘Well, since you ask me,’ said Travers, with quite unnecessary dryness, ‘I never did think so.’

‘Nor I,’ said the Colonel; ‘I thought from the first that was never my Bingo. Why, Bingo would make two of that beast!’

And Lilian and her aunt both protested that they had had their doubts from the first.

‘Zen you pairmeet zat I remove ‘im?’ said the Frenchman.

‘Certainly,’ said the Colonel; and after some apologies on our part for the mistake, he went off in triumph, with the detestable poodle frisking after him.

When he had gone the Colonel laid his hand kindly on my shoulder. ‘Don’t look so cut up about it, my boy,’ he said; ‘you did your best—there was a sort of likeness, to anyone who didn’t know Bingo as we did.’

Just then the Frenchman again appeared at the hedge. ‘A thousand pardons,’ he said, ‘bot I find zis upon my dog—it is not to me. Allow me to restore it viz many compliments.’

It was Bingo’s collar. Travers took it from his hand and brought it to us.

‘This was on the dog when you stopped that fellow, didn’t you say?’ he asked me.

One more lie—and I was so weary of falsehood! ‘Y-yes,’ I said reluctantly, ‘that was so.’

‘Very extraordinary,’ said Travers; ‘that’s the wrong poodle beyond a doubt, but when he’s found, he’s wearing the right dog’s collar! Now how do you account for that?’

‘My good fellow,’ I said impatiently, ‘I’m not in the witness box. I *can’t* account for it. It—it’s a mere coincidence!’

‘But look here, my *dear* Weatherhead,’ argued Travers (whether in good faith or not I never could quite make out), ‘don’t you see what a tremendously important link it is? Here’s a dog who (as I understand the facts) had a silver collar, with his name engraved on it, round his neck at the time he was lost. Here’s that identical collar turning up soon afterwards round the neck of a totally different dog! We must follow this up; we must get at the bottom of it somehow! With a clue like this, we’re sure to find out, either the dog himself, or what’s become of him! Just try

to recollect exactly what happened, there's a good fellow. This is just the sort of thing I like !'

It was the sort of thing I did not enjoy at all. ' You must excuse me to-night, Travers,' I said uncomfortably ; ' you see, just now it's rather a sore subject for me—and I'm not feeling very well ! ' I was grateful just then for a reassuring glance of pity and confidence from Lilian's sweet eyes which revived my drooping spirits for the moment.

' Yes, we'll go into it to-morrow, Travers,' said the Colonel ; ' and then—hullo, why, there's that confounded Frenchman *again* ! '

It was indeed ; he came prancing back delicately, with a malicious enjoyment on his wrinkled face. ' Once more I return to apologise,' he said. ' My poodle 'as 'ad ze grave indiscretion to make a very big 'ole at ze bottom of ze garden ! '

I assured him that it was of no consequence. ' Perhaps,' he replied, looking steadily at me through his keen half-shut eyes, ' you vill not say zat ven you regard ze 'ole. And you others, I spik to you : somtimes von loses a somzing vich is quite near all ze time. It is ver droll, eh ? my vord, ha, ha, ha ! ' And he ambled off, with an aggressively fiendish laugh that chilled my blood.

' What the dooce did he mean by that, eh ? ' said the Colonel blankly.

' Don't know,' said Travers ; ' suppose we go and inspect the hole ? '

But before that I had contrived to draw near it myself, in deadly fear lest the Frenchman's last words had contained some innuendo which I had not understood.

It was light enough still for me to see something, at the unexpected horror of which I very nearly fainted.

That thrice accursed poodle which I had been insane enough to attempt to foist upon the Colonel must, it seems, have buried his supper the night before very near the spot in which I had laid Bingo, and his attempts to exhume his bone had brought the remains of my victim to the surface !

There the corpse lay, on the very top of the excavations. Time had not, of course, improved its appearance, which was ghastly in the extreme, but still plainly recognisable by the eye of affection.

' It's a very ordinary hole,' I gasped, putting myself before it and trying to turn them back. ' Nothing in it—nothing at all ! '

‘Except one Algernon Weatherhead, Esq., eh?’ whispered Travers jocosely in my ear.

‘No, but,’ persisted the Colonel, advancing, ‘look here! Has the dog damaged any of your shrubs?’

‘No, no!’ I cried, piteously, ‘quite the reverse. Let’s all go indoors now; it’s getting so cold!’

‘See, there *is* a shrub or something uprooted!’ said the Colonel, still coming nearer that fatal hole. ‘Why, hullo, look there! What’s that?’

Lilian, who was by his side, gave a slight scream. ‘Uncle,’ she cried, ‘it looks like—like *Bingo*!’

The Colonel turned suddenly upon me. ‘Do you hear?’ he demanded, in a choked voice. ‘You hear what she says? Can’t you speak out? Is that our *Bingo*? ’

I gave it up at last; I only longed to be allowed to crawl away under something! ‘Yes,’ I said in a dull whisper, as I sat down heavily on a garden seat, ‘yes . . . that’s *Bingo* . . . misfortune . . . shoot him . . . quite an accident!’

There was a terrible explosion after that; they saw at last how I had deceived them, and put the very worst construction upon everything. Even now I writhe impotently at times, and my cheeks smart and tingle with humiliation, as I recall that scene—the Colonel’s very plain speaking, Lilian’s passionate reproaches and contempt, and her aunt’s speechless prostration of disappointment.

I made no attempt to defend myself; I was not perhaps the complete villain they deemed me, but I felt dully that no doubt it all served me perfectly right.

Still I do not think I am under any obligation to put it all down in black and white here.

Travers had vanished at the first opportunity—whether out of delicacy, or the fear of breaking out into unseasonable mirth, I cannot say; and shortly afterwards the others came to where I sat silent with bowed head, and bade me a stern and final farewell.

And then, as the last gleam of Lilian’s white dress vanished down the garden path, I laid my head down on the table amongst the coffee-cups and cried like a beaten child.

* * * * *

I got leave as soon as I could and went abroad. The morning after my return I noticed, while shaving, that there was a small square marble tablet placed against the wall of the Colonel’s

garden. I got my opera-glass and read—and pleasant reading it was—the following inscription :—

IN AFFECTIONATE MEMORY
OF
B I N G O,
SECRETLY AND CRUELLY PUT TO DEATH,
IN COLD BLOOD,
BY A
NEIGHBOUR AND FRIEND.
JUNE, 1881.

If this explanation of mine ever reaches my neighbours' eyes, I humbly hope they will have the humanity either to take away or tone down that tablet. They cannot conceive what I suffer, when curious visitors insist, as they do every day, in spelling out the words from our windows, and asking me countless questions about them !

Sometimes I meet the Curries about the village, and, as they pass me with averted heads, I feel myself growing crimson. Travers is almost always with Lilian now. He has given her a dog—a fox-terrier—and they take ostentatiously elaborate precautions to keep it out of my garden.

I should like to assure them here that they need not be under any alarm. I have shot one dog.

F. ANSTEY.



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